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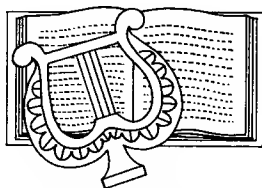
**PICTURES OF LIFE
AT HOME & ABROAD.**

BY ALBERT SMITH.



RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET
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ALBERT SMITH.

LONDON :

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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PICTURES OF LIFE

AT

HOME AND ABROAD.



LOOSE LEAVES FROM THE TRAVELLERS' ALBUM AT CHAMONIX.

WE have not yet perfectly made up our minds as to the correct pathology of that national morbid propensity for flying about from one place to another, which is so deeply rooted in the breasts of the English, as soon as the Opera and Parliament have come to a stand-still. No nation in the world makes so much fuss as our own about the comforts of home, and there is none so notoriously anxious to run away from them. No sooner do the attractions of the season begin to wane—no sooner has the *cornet-à-piston* blown its dying notes at the last *réunion* of consequence, or the manœuvres and flirtations of the last Horticultural Society's *fête* become matters of retrospection, than we are informed (for, led by the rest of the wanderers, we never witnessed the attendant phenomena) a marked and melancholy change takes place in the domestic economy of London. Shutters close, and blinds become enveloped in newspapers; tables and chairs addict themselves to blouses of brown holland; portraits obscure their lineaments by veils of coarse

yellow gauze; chandeliers tie themselves up in bags; stair-carpets roll up like dormice into undisturbed tranquillity for the next four months; and fly-confounding coverings embrace every other *ameublement* in the visitable apartment of the mansion. Nor is it within-doors alone that this household pantomime takes place. The *trottoir* of Regent-street furnishes you with a very fair idea of the Great Desert of Sahara; and the various exhibitions, from long habit and disinclination to retire from business, perform to their own benches and attendants; Madame Tussaud sits down for company with Malibran, Oliver Cromwell, Cobbett, and Marie Antoinette; whilst the stall-girls at the Pantheon and Soho Bazaars pay one another complimentary visits, and admire each other's wares, because they have nothing else to do, except to wonder where on earth everybody has gone, or to practise ducking under their counters, like rabbits in a warren, against the world returns again.

We will allow them to wonder, when we reflect on the desolation which our erratic disposition produces at home. Even we ourselves, when abroad with the rest, are completely paralysed with the sight of the mobs of English that are running about every habitable corner of the Continent. We pass over Paris and Baden-Baden, for they have become almost portions of our own country, whatever opinion to the contrary may be held by Louis Philippe and the Grand Duke. But we will go further abroad:—again the same crowd of our countrymen awaits us. They climb the snowy mountains, and traverse the clear blue lakes of Switzerland; they swelter in the noontide sunshine of the smoothly-paved cities of Italy; they plunge into the bowels of the great pyramids of Egypt, or turn dizzy on the summits of the minarets

of Constantinople; whilst their travelling wants transport bottled porter to Athens and Windsor soap to Calabria. Doubtless, before another year has passed, an English hotel and tea-gardens will be established in the heart of Canton. Even our own language perpetually rings in our ears; nay, eight months have not passed, since, gliding over the Lago Maggiore, we heard a stalwart voice issuing from the cool grottoes of the Isola Bella, chanting with the vigour of a twenty-lung-power effort the bacchanalian canzone of "Jolly Nose"—unpleasant and ridiculous antithesis!

It is exactly one hundred years ago this present summer of one thousand eight hundred and forty-one, that our illustrious countrymen, Messrs. Pocock and Wyndham, first discovered the Valley of Chamonix and its accompanying wonders. The good people of Geneva, sober and steady-going citizens as they were, had long imagined that slate-pencil-and-saliva-looking Arve, that polluted the "arrowy Rhone" near their town, arose from amidst the high mountains, whose snow-covered summits glowed so richly in the sunset; but their knowledge extended not beyond this supposition. Imagining that they were the resort of a tribe of rapscallions, who at that time overran Savoy and the neighbouring countries, they felt little curiosity to penetrate into their solitude; they contented themselves merely with thinking that the chief of the mountains must be very high, and with christening the chain, out of compliment to their supposed occupiers, *Les Montagnes Maudites*. But this drop of knowledge was not sufficient to quench the thirst of our compatriots. They armed a strong body of retainers, and, starting from Geneva, after no small degree of labour, (for a very scrambling kind of a route the path from Bonneville to

Chamonix must have been at that period,) bivouacked close to the village of the Priurè, as it was then called, and were somewhat amazed the next morning to receive a visit—not from the cut-throat brigands whom they expected, but from the good Curé, who came to invite the strangers to pass a few days in the village. His hospitable mission was duly honoured; and it was during their sojourn with these simple people, who had then little idea of any world beyond the rocky boundaries of their own valley, that they visited and explored those remarkable objects, which, year after year, have drawn thousands to inspect from any corner of the globe. One emblem alone of their expedition now remains. As you descend the narrow path which leads from the cabin at Montauvert to the Mer de Glace, the guides point out a large flat, reddish stone, which bears to this day the name of Le Rocher des Anglais, and on this, tradition reports, our travellers once dined during their ramble of discovery. We can imagine what their feelings were when that magnificent glacier first burst upon them in all its awful and mighty solitude! How different to the *towzey-mowzey*, as Fenimore Cooper calls it, which is now felt, as a matter of course, by the countless tribes who visit it.

Our first visit to Chamonix was unlucky, inasmuch as from the time we entered the porch of the Hôtel de Londres to the hour we finally quitted it, we never went ten yards from the house. Rain, rain, rain—unceasing, overwhelming rain, entirely upset every plan we had formed for our excursions, and made us keenly regret having left the comforts and amusing resources which Geneva affords to travellers for the miserable *ennui* of our mountain sojourn. There were few other visitors in the hotel, for the season was too premature and unsettled:

we ourselves had been compelled by previous arrangements to select this time for our visit; and those who were with us were most despondingly ill-tempered. Although we stopped three days in the valley, we never once caught a glimpse of Mont Blanc, the clouds entirely concealing his summit, and descending two-thirds of the distance down his sides. We had no books but the eternal Ebel, the no less widely circulated Murray, and a copy of the humorous adventures of M. Vieuxbois, with his "*objet aimé*," which some previous traveller had left behind him. We studied these over and over again; we read every hotel card that was stuck up in the passage, until we could have passed as a walking advertisement of all the inns in Switzerland; and, finally, we copied into our note-books the stencilled view of the column in the Place Vendôme, which graced the chimney-board in the fire-place. We crept out, armed with a macintosh and umbrella, to the "*Cabinets d'Histoire Naturelle*" of the guides, and inspected their agate ear-drops, their crystal wafer-stamps, and chamois-horn boot-hooks, with intense curiosity; we pored over their little relief models of the valley and its surrounding mountains, until we knew every peak and glacier as well as the original makers; and we were thankful for the little relief they afforded to our inaction, which, accompanied by the monotonous brawling of the Arveiron, and the beating of the rain on the windward panes of glass, was miserably depressing. On the fourth morning we rushed into a return *char-à-banc*, and buttoning all the leather curtains closely around us, returned to Geneva, as speedily as the driver and the swollen water-courses would permit.

It was during this melancholy visit, which for the time nearly cured us of the travelling mania, that we made the

following extracts from the *Livre des Voyageurs*, which we found on one of the tables in the *salle à manger*. The majority of them, it will be seen, are in English, as these kinds of effusions generally are; probably resulting from a vanity of the same impulse which prompts us to write our names on Memnon's nose, or cut our initials on the picture-frames at Hampton Court. We will only add, that the *addenda* and commentaries are by different hands; and that if any irritable traveller should feel insulted at our laying the emanations of his mind before the public, he will find our card left at the publisher's; it is our wish to give satisfaction not only to one, but generally.

"Aug. 25, 1840. Mr. and Mrs. John Robinson, and Mr. John Robinson, jun., went to the Mer de Glace to-day, and returned back again in safety from the interesting, yet thrillingly perilous excursion."

(Added in pencil.) "You don't say so! What a proud day for England!"

"M. Blake, de Peckam, et sa femme et sa famille mangèrent leur diner ici le 16 Août, 1838, et ils étaient très content avec les pommes de terres et le poisson qui était très bon. Ils ont été aujourd'hui au *Mere* de Glace."

"Si M. Blake a trouvé la *Mere* de Glace, peut-être il connaît aussi les enfans."

"Mr. Edward Haddon begs to caution travellers against going to the Albergo della Posta at Duomo D'Ossola. The charges are high, the people uncivil, the rooms dirty, and the cookery detestable."

"Not true. The Albergo della Posta is the best inn in Piedmont.—J. W."

“Which it may be very easily, and yet only a respectable pig-sty. Mr. James Hartley agrees with the first writer. He dined at the inn in question about three weeks since. The soup was apparently lamp-oil and hot water shaken together; and a fowl stuffed with *live gentles* formed one of the dishes.”

“I have just concluded a week’s sojourn at Chamonix, and have been miserably disappointed with what I have seen. There is nothing in Switzerland that will bear comparison with parallel scenes in the United States. The view from the Flegère is immeasurably inferior to that from the Pine Orchard; and the vaunted Mer de Glace nothing but a huge mass of half-thawed todgey snow and ice.—HENRY FUTTON, U.S.”

“Oh! yes! tarnation odd, I calculate, that Jonathan should come so far to behold so little. Has he seen the great hill in New York State that is so high as to be quite offensive in warm weather? I rayther think not. Oh! no!”

“We are sorry an American’s name must necessarily give rise to pasquinades. Written in his absence, these squibs are so many registers of the writer’s mean cowardice. We ourselves have just returned from the Mer de Glace, and think that in awful grandeur it is on a level with the Niagara falls.—C. J. & F. O. MANHATTANESE.”

“A pedestrian traveller, weather-bound at the Hôtel de Londres, September 7, 1838, composeth these verses for amusement.

" LINES ON GENEVA.

- " Ruthless rain in cascades pouring,
Lightning echoing, torrents roaring;
Clouds obscuring every view,
Nought to see, and less to do.
Muse of muddled brains, inspire me,
With a poet's rapture fire me,
Whilst I pen this careless lay,
Just to pass the hours away.
- " Fair Geneva! favoured city,
Bastions frowning, buildings pretty,
Crested by the high Salève,
Mirror'd in thy lake's blue wave;
Ramparts, whence you rest your eyes on
Mont Blanc, crowning the horizon;
And rich vineyards, growing poorer
As they climb ' the darken'd Jura.'
- " Then, thy bridge across the Rhone,
Built of wooden beams alone;
And thy verdant Isle des Barques,
Like an insulated park.
Steamers in thy harbour lying
To Lausanne and Villeneuve plying,
If a tour you choose to make
Round the margin of the lake.
- " Shops for watches very thin,
Gold without, and brass within.
Snuff-boxes to tinkle sonnets;
Women in large flapping bonnets;
Milan voitures very crazy,
Kept by *vetturini* lazy,
Who will take two days to creep
O'er the mighty Simplon's steep.
- " Diligences coming in
With postilion's crack-whip din,
Pack'd with English all the way
From the Rue St. Honoré.

Touters to the *bureau* rushing,
 Cards presenting, luggage crushing.
 From these rhymes you may conceive a
 Perfect picture of Geneva."

"Signor Silvestri, di Milano, pensa che la Natura non è stata giusta, nel dare tanto ghiaccio alla Svizzera, dove decisamente non c'era di bisogno. Egli sarebbe di più piaciuto se il *glacier de Buissons* fosse nel mezzo di Milano, dove sarebbe più utile di fornire ghiaccie per l'audienza del Teatro alla Scala."

* * "Silvestri, Albergo della Croce Bianca, Corso di Porta Vercelina. Cucina tanto a pasto che a conto: vini squisiti d'ogni qualità anche esteri. Grands et petits rooms with neat ness and to moderation of the traveller well to behold."

"An Englishman begs to recommend the Hôtel de Lemman, Rue de Rhone, at Geneva, as a pleasant inn. It is not half the expense of the Bergues, and twice as comfortable: added to which (not the least attraction,) Madame Rousillon, the hostess, is a *very pretty woman*."

"Oh, fie! sly old fox!" (*in pencil*.)

"The gentleman is correct in saying the Hôtel de Lemman is *not* half the expense of the Bergues. I wish it was. The hostess is as ugly as sin, and not half so pleasant."

"Ce monsieur a tort—ce n'est pas vrai. Madame Rousillon est gentille—peut-être—mais ce n'est rien de rare. Ses cheveux sont un peu-trop rouges, et sa taille est trop grosse. Cependant elle a de l'esprit, et fait une excellente dame de comptoir pour le café.—UN SUISSE QUI COMPREND D'ANGLAIS."

THE ASCENTS OF MONT BLANC,

which may be sung to the popular air of "Claude du Val," as connected with *the name on the beam* at the Adelphi:—

When Jacques Balmat from his party was thrown,
He found out the summit untaught and alone,
And when he returned to his doctor with glee,
He said, "For your care you shall go up with me,"

With your baton so sharp, tra la.

The next who tried was De Saussure, we're told,
Who climb'd in a full suit of scarlet and gold:
Whilst poor M. Bourrit, four times driven back,
In dudgeon return'd to Geneva—good lack!

With his baton so sharp, tra la.

Woodley, Clissold, and Beaufoy, each thought it no lark,
And were followed by Jackson, and Sherwell, and Clarke.
Then Fellowes and Hawes by a new passage went,
And avoided the dangers of Hamel's ascent,

With their batons so sharp, tra la.

Brave Auldjo next was pulled over a bridge,
Of ice-poles laid on the glacier's ridge;
You will see all his wonderful feats, if you look
At the views drawn by Harding, and placed in his book,

And his baton so sharp, tra la.

Full forty gentlemen, wealthy and bold,
Have climb'd up in spite of the labour and cold;
But of all that number there lives not one
Who speaks of the journey as very good fun.

With their batons so sharp, tra la.

JACK SHEPPARD.



AN EXCURSION TO CHILLON.

AMONGST all the interesting localities with which the Lake of Geneva abounds, there is not one more generally visited, especially by English tourists, than the *château* of Chillon; and the excursion thither by water, provided always that the weather be favourable, is one of the most delightful that can be imagined. Two steamers, the *Leman* and *Guillaume Tell*, leave Geneva every other morning at nine o'clock; there is, however, another fine boat in the harbour always at anchor, called the *Winkelried*, which never stirs out, in consequence of the other companies buying up its opposition at so much *per diem*; and the proprietor, we were told, realises a handsome income by his indolent craft. The distance from Geneva to Villeneuve, which is the nearest landing-place to Chillon, and which also comprehends the entire length of the lake, is about seventeen leagues; and the boat stops at all the intermediate towns. The fare is sixty batz (7s. 6d.) for the best part of the vessel, but you may go much cheaper in the fore-cabin.

It is an extremely difficult task to recount from memory all the interesting sites that are pointed out to you during your little voyage. You will notice Ferney, where Voltaire resided; and the picturesque Lausanne, where our countryman Gibbon wrote the greater part of his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; the well-known Campagne Diodati, at Coligny, which Lord Byron inhabited during his stay in Switzerland; the village of Coppet, where Madame de Staël once had an elegant *château*; together with the mighty Alps crowned by

Mont Blanc on one side, and the “darkened Jura” on the other, stretching along the horizon on each side of the lake. But it is with

“The self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,”

that the principal features of the Lake of Geneva are associated. At the base of the Salève, on your right, is the little village of Bossey, where he was placed at school with the good M. Lambercier; and further on, you will pass the clean town of Nyon, where his father followed the humble trade of watchmaking, after he left Geneva, and where Jean Jacques divided the first affections of his heart between Mesdemoiselles de Vulson and Goton, whose rival attractions he describes with such piquancy in his *Confessions*. Then comes the *château* of Chailly, the abode of his fair friend, Madame de Warens, and the birth-place of her gardener, Claude Arnet; and higher up you discern “Clarens, sweet Clarens,” on which modest village the *Nouvelle Heloise* has conferred an everlasting celebrity:

“’Twas not for fiction chose Rousseau this spot,
Peopling it with affections; but he found
It was the scene which passion must allot
To the mind’s purified beings; ’twas the ground
Where early Love his Psyche’s zone unbound,
And hallow’d it with loveliness.”*

On the opposite side are the rocks of Meillerie, where the boat of St. Preux and Madame Wolmar was driven

* “Je dirai volontiers à ceux qui ont du goût, et qui sont sensibles: Allez à Vevay—visitez le pays, examinez le sites, promenez vous sur le lac, et dites si la Nature n’a pas fait ce beau pays pour une Julie, pour une Claire, et pour un St. Preux: mais ne les y cherchez pas.”—*Les Confessions*, livre iv.

for shelter during the storm ; but their inequalities have been much levelled by the formation of the Simplon *route*. It is also close to the castle of Chillon that the *dénouement* of the novel is fixed, or rather the circumstances that lead to the death of Julie, the heroine.

We landed at Villeneuve, after a tolerably rough passage for an inland piece of water, and, accomplishing a beautiful walk of twenty minutes along the edge of the lake, arrived at Chillon. On knocking at the postern, we were immediately allowed to enter, by an old soldier, the peaceful sentinel of the fortress ; and were by him committed to the guidance of the female who exhibited the curiosities of the castle—an intelligent *Vaudoise*, with all the pleasing expression of her canton depicted on her face. Following our conductress across a court-yard, and then down some dark and time-worn steps, we passed through an aperture in the wall rather than a door, and stood in the celebrated dungeon. It is too gloomy at first to discern objects clearly, but by degrees we became sensible of being in a long, low, vaulted apartment, with a row of pillars “of gothic mould” down the middle, and small loop-holes on one side to admit light and air. All the views we have yet seen of the prison make it too lofty : it is in reality a *crypt*, and we should think that the pillars are barely eight feet high. Our guide persuaded us to buy a little pamphlet descriptive of the castle, at the expense of a franc, and we gained some information from it about Bonnivard and his captivity.

The castle itself is an irregular mass of square buildings, and, before the invention of artillery, was deemed impregnable, as it entirely shut the narrow passage between the lake and the mountain, whose *escarpements* were formerly thought to be inaccessible ; it could now,

however, be easily commanded by cannon on the heights. Our little book describes it as being built in 1238, by Amadée IV., Count of Savoy, upon a rock which formed a small island in the lake, united to the mainland by a light wooden bridge. The dungeons served from time to time to incarcerate many important prisoners, and Francis Bonnivard, Prior of St. Victor at Geneva, languished here six years in captivity. He has been commonly known as the "Prisoner of Chillon," but this is erroneous; since Lord Byron was not aware of his existence when he wrote the poem; and the celebrated sonnet on Chillon, which is now usually placed at the commencement, was written at a subsequent period. The poem itself was composed in the little parlour of the neat inn that overlooks the lake at Ouchy, a small village near Lausanne, where its noble author was detained two days by bad weather, in June 1816.

There are two or three common errors in circulation, respecting Chillon which we may safely correct. In the first place, the floor of the dungeon is described as being below the level of the watermark outside:—

"A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave,
Below the surface of the lake,
The dark vault lies wherein we lay."

This is a mistake, and may be easily disproved; for, in the very next dungeon, whose floor is on the same level as Bonnivard's, they show you a trap-door, through which the bodies of the murdered prisoners were thrown into the lake;—of course, had the floor been lower than the water, the dungeon would have been inundated on opening the trap.* Again, most of the authors and guide-books

* Since the above was written, a paper on Chillon has appeared in

that have spoken of Chillon, (and they all appear to copy from each other,) describe Lord Byron's name as being cut upon the column to which Bonnivard was confined. Here is another error: the pillar containing the iron staple is the fifth in order from the entrance, and the noble poet engraved his name upon the third, in company with Fenimore Cooper's, and several others of equal note. Some two or three years back, a mischievous brute took advantage of the momentary absence of the guide, to cut a line through the name of Byron, and succeeded too well in his wanton attempt. The woman told us there were only two visitors in the dungeon at the time, an Englishman and an Italian; but we will hope, for the credit of our nation, it was not the former. We took the impression of the name ourselves. After visiting some other dungeons, to which the original entrance was merely a species of chimney, we were introduced to the chamber of the Duke, with another old, decaying apartment or two; but the kitchen interested us most. It is a large room, with a floor and ceiling of wood, the latter being supported by stone columns. We were told it was formerly much larger, but had been divided into several

the *Saturday Magazine*, and from it we quote the following remarks: "In 1817, M. Simon visited the castle and the far-famed dungeon, which had so long been reported to be below the level of the lake. On comparing the height of the loophole-gratings above the water's edge from the outside, and above the rocky floor inside, he satisfied himself that the latter was more elevated than the former; especially after having observed a hollow place full of water, which must have come from the lake, and would have risen above the floor of the dungeon if it had really been lower than the level of the water outside." It is somewhat remarkable that the name of Byron, who has conferred such deathless fame upon the Castle of Chillon, is never once mentioned throughout the article.

apartments. The top of the castle was the last part we visited. There is a fine view from the turrets of the Alps and the rich Pays de Vaud, with the blue and sparkling waters of the lake beneath; and we were pleased to see the "small green isle" which has been celebrated in the poem. There is a tree upon it with two or three shrubs, but no habitation; nor, indeed, is there room for one.

A RENCONTRE WITH THE BRIGANDS.

"Sir, we are undone! These are the villains
That all the travellers do fear so much."

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

YE who listen to the romantic stories of those who have never left England, and pursue with eagerness the routes of the Society of Useful Knowledge's maps and Mrs. Starke's "Italy,"—who expect that the reality will make good the promises of guide-books, attend to the following account of a meeting with the brigands.

Travelling English! be not deceived by Prout, Stanfield, and Roberts, and that arch-impostor Finden, whose magic burin throws such sun-light over his scenes. Especially mistrust the pantomimic dioramas, and do not think that you will meet beautiful girls at every turn of the road in Switzerland, in short red-petticoats and blue bows on their shoulders. Do not believe that peasants are perpetually dancing under the vine-covered trellises in Italy, and that the brigands are dressed in spangled green velvet tunics, with ribands bound round their calves, and watches and medals hung about them after the manner of Mr. Wallack,—do not, I say, place cre-

dence in these things ; if you do, you will be lamentably deceived.

We had dreamed away a week amongst the crumbling magnificence of Venice (that amphibious city of human beavers), and having climbed the Campanile of San Marco, and descended to the dungeons of the Ducal Palace, as well as “ stood upon the Bridge of Sighs,” and been baked beneath the sable canopies of the gondolas, a cross-breed between a canoe and a floating hot-house, we began to think of proceeding on our journey. But travelling in the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom is very different from driving in a cab with your carpet-bag to Euston Square or Nine Elms. The *Servizio dei R. Velociferi Privilegiati* (so called from their never accomplishing by any chance above six miles an hour), is still in its infancy; and there are only two public conveyances a-week from Venice to Bologna, in which it is necessary to bespeak your places some days beforehand. We consequently found every list of passengers filled up for some time to come, and it was not in the very best temper that I and my friend H——— left the *Uffizio* on the Grand Canal, and flung ourselves moodily amongst the cushions of the gondola to return to our hotel, with the prospect of being detained another week in Venice.

As chance would have it,—and a very ill chance it proved,—there was a gentleman from Hamburgh at the *Albergo dell' Europa*, where we were stopping, who was similarly situated to ourselves, and equally anxious to reach Florence. Finding that we were bent upon the same journey, he agreed to pay the third of the expense of a posting-carriage, and we decided upon leaving Venice the next morning, intending to travel night and day, by which means we should be enabled to outstrip the dili-

gence by twenty or thirty hours. Every inquiry was made by us connected with our route at the *Direzione della Posta*, and we were assured that the roads were secure, the posting arrangements admirable, and we finished the evening by purchasing a few trifling *souvenirs* of the "Queen of the Adriatic" for our friends in England, including some little silver gondolas for brooches, which alone reached their destination.

At two o'clock on Saturday, August 8, 1840, we quitted Venice in a two-oared gondola, and having a fair wind, which enabled us to mount a sail, arrived at Fusina on the mainland by half-past three. A delay of an hour took place in inspecting passports and baggage, and wrangling with the post-master, who for some time refused to let us have a carriage and horses, because we had not got a formal permission from Government. After much altercation, he at length complied, and we started in a voiture without doors or lining, under the assurance of finding a better one at the next post. By the promise of an additionnal *buono mano*, the postilion moved his cattle at a pace somewhat faster than we could have walked; and following the course of the Brenta, with its palace-covered banks, weedy straggling gardens, and whitewashed statues, we got to Padua about seven. On quitting the city, one of the most awful thunder-storms I ever witnessed commenced, which lasted the whole way to Monselice, when the weather cleared up as suddenly as it had become gloomy, giving place to a brilliant moon.

Opposite the post-house at Monselice was a wretched cabaret, filled with peasants of the lowest order, who clustered round us, and inspected every article of luggage, as it was removed from the carriage to another. I paid no attention to this at the time, as we had got pretty well

inured to the curiosity of loiterers at the inns; but I have since been convinced that information was sent along the road of our approach; especially as the postilion contrived all sorts of delays before our departure, and for the first two leagues scarcely urged his horses beyond a walk. An ill-looking hound he was, too, with large round earrings peeping out from amongst long black ringlets that shadowed his sallow countenance: his features bore the stamp of cunning and villany.

The clock struck ten as we left Monselice, and my companions composed themselves, soon informing me by their deep inspirations that they were fast asleep. The voiture was a small landau with a leathern front, which buckled on to the head when it was up, and was rendered a close carriage, the said front being fitted up with small windows, that permitted a view of the country, and the vehicle was likewise furnished with curtains on each side. We had jogged on for about half an hour, and I was sitting opposite to my fellow-travellers, with my back to the horses, listening to the monotonous "*hi!*" of the postilion, and the eternal jangling of the bells on the bridles, when our carriage suddenly stopped, and I heard a tumult of strange voices in the road. On turning to discover the cause of this interruption, I saw, through the front glasses, a party of six or seven men ranged in a semicircle across the road, pointing their guns at the carriage, and gradually closing around us.

There could be no mistake as to our visitors, or their intentions. I awoke my friends; and recollecting that I had eight English sovereigns loose in my waistcoat pocket, contrived to thrust seven of them into my mouth, the remaining one I slipped into my shoe. I had barely concealed this last, when the curtains were torn violently

down, and the muzzles of six guns made their appearance in most unpleasant propinquity to our heads, followed by half-a-dozen of the most ill-favoured visages I had ever seen. I have said there was a full moon, and I was enabled to perceive that the guns were upon full cock. The ruffians were likewise armed with pistols in their girdles, and long poniard-knives that dangled from their necks and gleamed romantically in the moonbeams. Singular enough, neither myself nor my friend were flurried at this uncomfortable moment. Odd ideas *will* cross peoples' minds in the most serious positions, and the sole thought that struck me was, that our situation was precisely similar to a scene I had witnessed in an adaptation of Paul Clifford at Covent Garden, some three or four years back, when the "Bath mail" was robbed on the stage.

My companions descended, in obedience to the orders of the banditti: but I was less fortunate. The door on my side chanced to have been despoiled of its hinges, and was inclosed with a thin plate of iron fixed on by nails. It was impossible to open it, and I was unable to get out. An immense ruffian of six-feet-two, who appeared to be the chief of the party, finding that it did not give way, after several strenuous pulls, finally seized me by the collar, and dragging me over the door, flung me with some violence upon the ground, close to the hind-wheels of the carriage. I was half stunned by the fall; but we had no time allowed for qualmishness, as a general rifling immediately commenced. Two of the party entered the carriage, and threw everything out. They tore down the linings, and broke the seats open, to make sure that nothing was concealed; after which they cut the cords which secured our luggage underneath the postilion's

seat, and handed down our effects in no very gentle manner, swearing, pulling, and hurrying us about all the time.

"*Presto! presto! soldi! sacramento!*" was all they uttered; but its meaning, accompanied by most expressive pantomime, was very obvious. I had the side-pocket of my blouse filled with *zwanzigers* for paying the posts, being the banker of the party, and I immediately emptied it into the cap of the one who had the charge of me, hoping that this would satisfy them. But I was mistaken. Each of us was rifled in turn, and it was with no small regret that I saw them possess themselves of my knife and pencil-case, which, being keepsakes, I would fain have preserved. My pocket-book also passed into their hands; but upon my exclaiming "*Pasaporta!*" it was returned;—a circumstance I hailed with much satisfaction, since in one of its compartments was a letter of credit upon Rothschild for one hundred pounds, which I have saved. It may be imagined that I had not much leisure to watch their proceedings with my comrades. I saw my friend's valuable gold watch fly from his waistcoat pocket as they broke the guard; and I recollect observing the Hamburg gentleman crouching on his knees and elbows, with his nose in the dust, under the carriage; but whether from sheer fright, or by command, I know not, nor did I like to inquire afterwards. We all lost our braces, with which they appeared extremely delighted, as well as our handkerchiefs. I had a scarf round my neck, fastened by two gold pins and a chain, which I had fixed in with silk. Of course, such a prize was not to be left; and, after many violent attempts to get the scarf away, during which I was nearly strangled, my robber coolly cut it from my neck, pins and all. My readers may be assured

that the feelings of the cold steel against my neck was anything but pleasant ; and I firmly believe that it would have been a matter of perfect indifference to the brigand whether he thrust the point into my chest or not. When he had concluded I was ordered to retake my seat in the carriage, a command which I gladly obeyed, in the hope that they had finished with me ; since the leathern purse-belt that I wore had escaped their observation, and in one of its pockets were two of Herries's circular notes for twenty pounds each, besides a few napoleons. But, unfortunately, another of the party took it into his head to search me, and I once more got down at his command, which was, as heretofore, accompanied by a loaded gun at my ear. In vain I replied "*Niente*" to all his sounding of my different pockets. He still remained unsatisfied, and seizing the waistband of my trowsers, tore them down the side-seam for some twelve inches, when the luckless *cintura* made its appearance, and was in an instant transferred from my waist to his own. A circumstance also occurred that gave me much uneasiness for the moment. The German had a valuable diamond ring on his finger, which he could not readily remove, and he called to us in a voice of extreme horror that they were going to cut off his finger. He, however, implored a moment's patience, and contrived, by wetting his finger, to take off the jewel. It struck me that I had also a ring which could not be got off, and although not of much value, might still tempt them to mutilate my hand. By good fortune I managed to slip the ring round until the signet was turned towards the palm, and thus escaped their notice.

We were not sorry when they thrust us finally into the vehicle ; for we thought it something to have got off with our lives. My friend and myself had been walk-

ing through Switzerland, and had only two knapsacks for luggage; but the German's loss was considerable, including, besides his *malles* and carpet-bag, a writing desk, in which were some hundreds of francs, and a letter of credit upon a banker at Naples for two thousand more. The only things I saved were the sovereigns I had put into my mouth, my pocket-book, and the little gondolas which were in the same pocket with my handkerchief. As we were starting again they threw into the carriage my old straw boating-hat which I had worn all the way from Chertsey; but my friend's new Tuscan adorned the head of one of the party as they marched off amongst the trees.

It was midnight before we arrived at Rovigo. There is a *pont volant* across the Adige, about a league from the town, which it took us half an hour to cross, being—as they always are—on the other side when we got up to the river. They also detained us some time, because we had no money to pay the geld, and I did not choose to exhibit our remaining scanty stock after what had occurred. At last we were allowed to proceed, under promise of payment on our arrival at the inn. From this spot a tedious journey of an hour brought us to the next town. The roads were rough, and full of holes from the late rains, the horses sluggish, and we impatient to arrive.

They had retired to rest at the posthouse, but we soon aroused them; and, having explained our circumstances, despatched a messenger to the Stazioni di Carabinieri, to summon the police, and awaited their return in our bed-chamber. It is but justice to state, the proprietor of the inn (the Albergo della Posta at Rovigo) was anxious to show us every attention, notwithstanding we gave

him to understand that we had not the means of remuneration. He paid the money for the post, as well as the trifle we owed for passing the bridge, and begged that we would consider ourselves at home as long as we chose to stay.

The police arrived in about ten minutes, and commenced taking our depositions, and giving directions for the departure of ten or twelve carbineers, who immediately left Rovigo for the scene of our stoppage. After them came several reporters to the provincial newspapers, equally anxious to be made acquainted with the particulars of the robbery; in fact, we were not able to get to sleep before three, and then I dreamt that I had got all my money back again, and that we saw the brigands chained by the legs, and sweeping the streets, after the manner of the criminal scavengers at Leghorn.

We were compelled to keep our beds the next morning until our garments were repaired. About nine the Venetian diligence, which we should have come by, had we been able to procure places, arrived at Rovigo. A young Prussian nobleman, whom we had met at Venice, the Baron de Hartmann, was amongst the passengers, and having heard what had occurred, it struck him that it must be ourselves, as he was standing on the steps of the *Albergo dell' Europa* when our gondola left. He hastened into our room, and in the most gentlemanlike manner, begged we would take of him as much money as was necessary for our wants, at the same time throwing a rouleau of napoleons upon the bed. We merely borrowed as much as would be sufficient to arrive at Florence, where we calculated upon obtaining assistance; nor would this fine young fellow take the slightest

acknowledgment. He observed, "that the word of an Englishman was sufficient."

We left Rovigo about noon, surrounded by nearly the whole population, who had turned out to stare at us. There was something ludicrous in our appearance, despoiled as we were of nearly all our wearing-apparel and it may be imagined we found little difficulty in clearing the *douanes* on our entry into the Papal States. At Bologna we purchased such few necessaries as were immediately requisite for our toilet; and these, tied up in a cotton pocket-handkerchief, were all the effects we carried into Florence. At this city, through the liberality of Mr. Hall, the English banker, we obtained fifty pounds upon the Paris letter of credit; and the German met with the same attention from that gentleman. The second day after our arrival we met M. Hartmann in the Palazzo Pitti, and it gave us great pleasure to be enabled to pay our small debt, together with a ring, which we begged him to accept as a *souvenir*.

Our adventure made us the heroes of all the *table d'hôtes* between Florence and Geneva, and we frequently heard our own story recounted, with many amusing exaggerations. We were likewise advised in several instances as how we ought to have acted, and caused much astonishment at the statement that we had travelled without pistols. Of one thing I am certain—that if we offered the least resistance we should have been killed, for they were seven to three, and all armed to the teeth. Besides which, the fatal adventure of Mr. and Mrs. Hunt, who were shot by the brigands some years back, on the road to Pæstum, during their wedding tour, was fresh in my memory, and we heard on all sides that, had

that unfortunate gentleman delivered up his property quietly, there would have been no bloodshed.

And now, reader, if you are anxious to have an interview with brigands, I beseech you start for Italy directly. Take money with you, travel by night, and make display of your wealth whenever you have an opportunity. This will hardly fail to bring them about you, in spite of all Mrs. Starke says to the contrary ; and, although I cannot promise you the first-rate excitement of having your wind-pipe cut through, your skull beaten in, or your brains blown out, I can give you my word that you will be pillaged to your heart's content. We learn everything better from experience than precept ; and, should chance cause me to travel in Italy again, I would endeavour to cheat the bandits of their full dues by stocking my pocket-book with notes from the Bank of Elegance, and filling my purse with penny coronation medals of the best brass. This would divert them for the time, since they do not examine things very closely, and then all the satisfaction and romance of the adventure might be had, without paying very dearly for it.

POSTSCRIPT.

SEVERAL months had passed since the foregoing article was written, and the affair had nearly been forgotten, except when the adventure was now and then recounted by my companion or myself, raising us to the dignity of becoming the momentary lions of a dinner-table, as real living travellers who had been attacked by real living brigands, to the fearful horror of all the old ladies, and intense excitement of the young ones. Some there were,

to be sure, amongst the round of our acquaintance, whom we never could convince otherwise than that the whole affair was a well-digested hoax; "for," added these stay-at-home unbelievers, "there are very few now who go to Italy and have the *good fortune* to meet with brigands." By others, the alleged conception was laid to the most mercenary motives. According to them, we had *outrun the constable*, and having entered considerably more into the gaieties of Milan and Venice than the state of our finances allowed, we had invented the account as a plausible scheme to obtain fresh notes of credit from England, without fresh accompanying notes of interrogation as to how we had contrived to get rid of the last remittance in so little time. We had no direct means of contradicting these aspersions upon our character. At last, however, we were enabled to convince our friends that we had spoken of the facts as they occurred.

To our great surprise, and no less gratification, we received a letter from the Home Office, in the early part of February, proving that although we had almost allowed the affair to drop, the proper authorities had not. Its contents were to the purpose, that the Austrian Ambassador at our court having requested we might be called upon to give evidence respecting "a highway robbery committed on us in Lombardy in August last," Lord Normanby had directed that we should make a declaration respecting the affair in question before a magistrate. We accordingly attended at the Home Office, and being referred to Bow Street, made an appointment there on Thursday, the 4th of February. The result was a long interview with Mr. Hall, the chief magistrate (to whose courtesies and attention we are much beholden), in his private room; Signor —— kindly attending to give us

his able assistance in translating the various documents which had been forwarded from Rovigo and Padua, and which were somewhat verbose and technical.

From Prince Esterhazy's letter, which was the first paper read, we learned how closely the police had followed in our steps to bring us back to Rovigo, in order to make a formal deposition before the proper authorities. The only evidence we had given had been the hurried declaration in our bedroom at Rovigo after the robbery, and we had started at an early hour the following morning; it being far from our wish to remain *per force* at that uninteresting town, solely for the purpose of satisfying the judicial authorities. At the same time we had not the slightest idea of ever recovering any of our effects.

To prove the extreme vigilance of the police, and the accurate information of the movements of travellers which the passport system affords, it will suffice to give the following example. The letter stated that we left Rovigo for Bologna the following day, where we arrived on the Monday afternoon; that we started thence on the Tuesday morning, and arrived at Florence on Wednesday night; and tracing us in a similar exact manner through Leghorn and Genoa to Milan, they finally (and fortunately) lost sight of us at the latter city.

The papers furnished by the court at Padua, although somewhat lengthy, treated more of the minute description of the articles recovered than the capture of the vagabonds who had taken them. I presume they thought *that* part of the business their own affair. We, however, learned that they had been detected by several of our things being found in their possession, and that the party consisted of eight, instead of seven, as I had before

stated. They had been suspected the day before of stealing some melons at Monselice, and had lain in wait the night of the robbery for some hours in the pelting storm. This might or might not have been the case; and I still look with rather suspicious retrospection on the small cabaret opposite the post-house where we last stopped. On one thing, however, they insisted,—that we were *not* the party for whom they had watched. They affirmed that information had been given them of a valuable prize, in the shape of some other English travellers, who were expected on the road that night from Venice. This reminded us that we had seen a handsome carriage in the inn-yard at Padua, whilst we changed horses, which had followed us to that city; but whose inmates were terrified from proceeding to Ferrara that night in consequence of the violence of the storm.* We likewise learned that the rascals had stationed scouts along the road we were to pursue; who, on any attempt to sound an alarm by the postilion's horn or otherwise, would have assassinated us. From the evidence of the postilion himself, he appears to have come off with tolerable credit at the criminal court at Padua on the 14th of November last. From this we gleaned the foregoing circumstances.

Much amusement was created as the account and description of the different articles recovered was read to us by Signor —, and we in turn recognised our respec-

* Should this meet the eye of any of the company whose equipage was in the inn-yard at Padua with ours on the afternoon of Saturday, August 8, 1840, we hope they will show in a proper manner how deep their debt of gratitude is to us for having been robbed in *mistake*, and having also placed our own throats and brains in danger instead of theirs.

tive property with eager interest. Nothing was said about the watches, the money, or the notes ; but even the humble remaining effects will (if we receive them from Italy) assume a hundredfold value in our eyes, from the circumstances connected with their adventures. As our penknives, knapsacks, journals, drawing-books, &c. were successively described, we appeared to be greeting friends who had long been estranged from us ; and our merriment was somewhat increased when Signor —— continued the list with “ *two ladies’ shoes, one kid and the other satin.*” Mr. Hall pleasantly observed, we had better not proceed, in case of some awkward disclosure ; but my friend cleared himself very satisfactorily, by stating that they were taken out as patterns to procure some French ones by when we arrived at Paris. A little paper-knife of Swiss wood, which I had bought on the Righi, whilst shivering with the cold of four o’clock in the morning, and endeavouring to open my eyes wide enough to see the sun rise (which process, I believe, no one ever *does* witness), was also recovered ; with some silk purses, empty of course, but being *souvenirs*, still valuable in proportion to our respective gallantry. One thing I was extremely annoyed at not hearing of, and that was a pair of old shoes, in which I had crossed the Alps on foot six times, and which I regarded with affectionate veneration. I have no doubt but that the authorities will yet discover some more of our effects. Be this as it may, our best thanks are due to the police for their extreme vigilance ; and it is likewise a source of much pleasure to us to offer this public acknowledgment of our gratitude to Mr. Hall, the banker at Florence, for his polite and kind assistance when we arrived at that city so utterly destitute.

We were pleased at receiving, a short time since, a

letter from our Prussian friend of two days, Baron de Hartmann, of Brandenburg, with a commission he wished executed in London, which we were but too happy to perform for him. We have likewise heard from our fellow-sufferer, Mr. Decastro. He has returned home once more safe and sound from *his* travels; but vows nothing shall ever induce him to set foot in Italy again, although he has some thoughts of paying a visit to England next summer, where he understands day and night travelling on the railroads is equally secure, and that there are no brigands.



A LITTLE TALK ABOUT BARTHOLOMEW FAIR—PAST AND PRESENT.

By the time this sheet is in the hands of the reader, Bartholomew fair will be spoken of as a festival that once was—an annual celebration, the account of which must henceforward be added, in the shape of an appendix, to the succeeding editions of Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes." For a long period its health has been visibly declining, from the effects of a shattered and depraved constitution. The same year that beheld the abolition of climbing-boys—who whilome peopled the locality whereon it was held, for their yearly banquet, when the kind-hearted Charles Lamb felt it no degradation to sup with them,—has also witnessed the extinction of the *fête*, to celebrate whose return the "clergy imps" assembled amongst the cattle-pens, then and there to discuss the hissing sausages and small ale which benevolence had provided for them.

Certainly, better times and places for reflection might be found in London than Smithfield on a fair-day: and yet,

we confess to have fallen into a day-dream on the fifth of the past month, when we paid what will probably be our last visit to this departed festival. We are indebted for our vision to no romance of poetic situation. We were sitting on the handle of a gaudily-painted hand-cart containing penny ginger-beer, by the side of a small perambulating theatre, which set forth "the vicissitudes of a servant-maid;" and, in spite of the unceasing noise on every side, we could not desist from indulging in a mental daguerreotype of events connected with the fair and its localities.

We first called to mind the period when Smithfield was "a plain, or smoothe felde," from which circumstance, according to old Fitzstephen, it derived its name; and when, instead of the London butchers and country drovers, a gay train of gallant knights and tramping men-at-arms, whose harness gleamed in the sunlight of the glittering lists, together with a bevy of smiling, fair-haired "damosels" on their ambling palfreys, rode over its unpaved area to join the tournaments there held. We pictured them coming by "Gilt-spurre, or Knight-rider Street,—so called because of the knights, who in quality of their honour wore gilt spurs, and who, with others, rode that way to the joustings and other feats of arms used in Smithfield." And then we thought what a fortune the events of these times would have been to the *boudoir* romancists of the present day, who write such pretty stories with dove's quills and otto of roses, for the annuals. Next we lost ourselves in a reverie about the sly Rahere,—the founder of the monastery and fair, and minstrel to Henry the First,—who was in former days employed to tell stories to royalty (an office, it would seem, not altogether obsolete), and who once began one

of so great a length that he himself fell asleep in the middle, and never finished it. Rahere, when he was sick, was frightened into this pious act by a supposed visitation of St. Bartholomew, and became the first head of the priory, within whose walls the drapers and clothiers invited to the fair were allowed to lock up their wares every night. Anon we allowed ourselves to be carried in dreamy listlessness along the stream of time, until we were again halting, as we chuckled at the recollection of the humorous doings in the fair in the days of "Rare Ben Jonson,"—the puppet motions of Hero and Leander, altered from Sestos and Abydos to Puddledock and Bankside,—the Bartholomew pig, "roasted with fire o' juniper and rosemary branches,"—the court of *pié-poudre*, the "well-educated ape," and the "hare that beat the tabor,"—all hackneyed subjects to mouldy anti-quaries, we allow; but, not being over-addicted to rum-maging dusty records and worm-eaten volumes, still interesting to common-place every-day people like ourselves. And lastly, we pictured the fair as we had known it in our own days, of which poor Hone has left us so lively a specimen, and calling back some of the scenes we had therein witnessed, we began to think that the abolition was not altogether useless or disadvantageous.

Whether our reflections would now have taken a retrograde turn, and wandered back again to the days of the tournaments, we know not; but, having arrived close upon the present period, we were somewhat startled, upon wishing to use it, to find that our handkerchief had disappeared whilst we had been lost in our reveries, and, possibly, was already fluttering before one of the neighbouring bandana-bazaars in Field-lane. Hereupon we determinated to give up ruminating in Smithfield, leaving

that process to those animals in the cattle-market whose peculiar nature it is so to do ; and having risen from our seat, and thanked the ginger-beer man for the accommodation his waggon afforded, we commenced making the tour of the fair, or rather, the ground once allotted to it.

There were no shows—no huge yellow caravans, or canvas pavilions, covered with wondrous representations of the marvels to be seen within: a few small portable theatres formed the leading exhibitions. One there was, to be sure, of higher pretensions, into which, upon payment of one penny, we were permitted to enter. The proprietor of the spectacle, who had pitched his theatre in the back-parlour of one of the houses near the Hospital-gate, stood at the street-door, and informed us that the entertainment set forth “The Bay of Naples in its native grandeur with the percession of the Ingian monarch and his elephint,—the sportsman and the stag as walked like life—the wild duck and the water spanell, with the burning of Hamburg.”

Here was enough to see, so we entered forthwith, and wedged ourselves in the corner of a room, small, and unpleasantly warm, where an audience of some five-and-twenty had already assembled before a small proscenium, about twelve feet high, having a painted drop-scene, which represented, as nearly as we could make out the localities, the Castle of Chillon moved to Virginia Water, with Athens and Mont Blanc in the background. After an Italian boy, who with his piano-organ formed the orchestra, had played “The days when we went gipsying,” the drop rose, and discovered the Bay of Naples, with surrounding buildings, and something of a conical shape painted on the back scene—the *flat* we think it is tech-

nically called—which we imagined to be a light-blue cotton night-cap, with a long tassel, until informed that it depicted “Vesuvius—the burnin’ mounting, as it appears from the sea-shore.” When the excitement caused by the rising of the curtain had somewhat subsided, a little figure dressed like a Turk shuffled rapidly across the front of the stage, moving his legs backwards and forwards, both at once, and evidently by means of a crank connected with the wheels he ran on, which were invisible to the audience. Next the “percession” commenced, which was extremely imposing, and would have been much more so if the manager had been less hasty in taking the figures off, and putting them on other stands to go across again, which gave them the appearance of being most unsteadily intoxicated upon their second *entrée*. Then a little man came on in a boat, and shot a duck, which the “spannell” swam after; and, finally, the ignition of some red fire at the foot of Vesuvius formed the burning of Hamburg, which conflagration was exceedingly advantageous in rapidly clearing the room of the audience, by reason of its sulphureous vapour.

The principal traffic of the fair, beyond the business transacted in gingerbread-husbands, and wax-dolls from fourpence to three shillings each, was monopolized by several men in tilted carts, who were haranguing little mobs of people, and apparently disposing of their wares as fast as they could put them up for sale.

There were such frequent bursts of laughter from the buyers, that we were attracted towards one of these perambulating bazaars, in the hope of participating in their merriment. The proprietor of the cart was a tall burly fellow, in a round hat and knee-breeches, something like an aristocratic railway navigator; and the cart, in

front of which he stood, was covered all over with a most curious display of goods, guns, braces, gimlets, waistcoats, saws, cruets,—in fact, specimens of almost everything ever manufactured. The man was selling the goods by his own auction, and had a flow of ready low wit,—pure, unadulterated chaff—which was most remarkable. We recollect a few of his jokes, and these we chronicle to show the style of his address, even at the risk of being again accused of “exhibiting the coarsest peculiarities of the coarsest classes, with such ultra accuracy.” But it is in the lower orders, according to our own notion, that the natural character of a people is to be best discovered.

“Now, then, my customers,” he exclaimed, advancing to the front of the cart, “I’ll tell you more lies in five minutes than you can prove true in a week. Now, missus,” he continued, addressing a female in the crowd, “no winking at me to get things cheap. My wife’s in the cart, and she’s as sharp as the thick end of a pen’orth of cheese, as ugly as sin, and not half so pleasant.”

A roar of laughter followed this sally as he took up a saw.

“Now, look here!—you never saw such a saw as this here saw is to saw in all the days you ever saw. This is a saw as *will* cut;—all you’ve got to do is to keep it back. If you was to lay this saw agin the root of a tree over night, and go home to bed——”

“Well, what then?” interrupted a fellow in the crowd, who wished to throw the dealer off his guard.

“Why,” replied the man, “the chances are that when you came in the morning you wouldn’t find it. Sold again!”

There was another laugh, and the would-be wag slunk away very crest-fallen.

“Now, I’m not going to take you in,” he continued, “If you don’t like these things, come again to-morrow, and I shan’t be here. I’ll charge you a pound for the saw, and if you don’t like that, I’ll say fifteen shillings. Come,—you’ve got faint hearts. Say twelve, ten, eight, five, three, *one!*—going for one! I’ll ask no more, and I’ll take no less. Sold again, and got the money!”

He now turned and picked out a cheap accordion, upon which he played some common air, and then proceeded.

“Now, look!—here’s a young piece of music: the apollonicon in St. Martin’s Lane lays a dozen every morning, and this is one of them. It’s got the advantage that, when you’re tired of it, it will blow the fire or mend your shoes. May I be rammed, jammed, and slammed into the mouth of a cannon, until I come out at the touch-hole as thin as a dead rushlight, if it ain’t cheap at five pound! But I’ll only take five shillings, and if that won’t do, I’ll only say one! Who’s got the lucky shilling?”

Not fifteen feet from the cart of this man there was another similarly laden, and a constant fire of salutations and mock abuse passed between the two vendors. The merchant, however, in this case was a mere boy—he could not have been above fourteen, but carrying an expression of the most precocious meaning we ever beheld. He was no whit inferior to his adversary in ready slang, as his following oration over a two-barrelled gun will testify:—

“There’s a little flaw in the lock, to be sure; but that don’t hinder its going off. I sold the fellow for two pound to a farmer in Leicestershire, and I’ll tell you what it did. The first day he took it out he fired one barrel, and killed six crows as he didn’t see; he fired the second, and shot nine partridges out of five, and the kick

of the gun knocked him back'ards into a ditch, and he fell upon a hare and killed that. These guns will shoot round a corner, and over a hay-rick; and they're used to fatten the paupers that are turned out of the Unions for not paying the Income Tax. They load the guns with fat bacon, and shoot it down their throats."

Of course this was a safe *entamure* for a laugh. When he had done talking about the gun, which, however, he did not sell, he took up a whip, and, cracking it two or three times in front of his cart, recommenced:—

"Here's a whip, now, to make a lazy wife get up of a morning, and make the kettle boil before the fire's alight. It even makes my horse go, and he's got a weak constitution and a bad resolution; he jibs going up hill, kicks going down, and travels on his knees on level ground. When he means to go, he blows hisself out with the celebrated railroad corn as sticks sideways in his inside, and tickles him into a trot. Who says a crown for this whip?"

There did not appear much disposition to buy the article, so the seller commenced a fresh panegyric.

"You'd better buy it: you won't have another chance. There never was but two made, and the man died, and took the patent with him. He wouldn't have made them so cheap, only he lived in a garret, and never paid his landlord, but when he went home always pulled the bottom of the house upstairs after him. If any man insults you, I'll warrant this whip to flog him from Newgate into the middle of next year. Who says a crown?"

There were two or three other carts of a similar description in different parts of Smithfield, but these fellows evidently enjoyed the supremacy. How many profits had to be made upon the articles, or what was their

original cost, we know not, but we bought four pocket-knives, each containing three blades, with very fair springs, and horn handles, for sixpence! We had a little conversation afterwards with the first-mentioned vendor, who was, out of his rostrum, a quiet, intelligent person, and he assured us that at Wolverhampton the ordinary *curry-combs* of the shops were being made by families for ninepence a dozen, the rivets being clenched and the teeth cut by mere infants.

Beyond these features there was little to notice;—the vitality of the fair was evidently at its last gasp, and the civic authorities did not appear inclined to act as a humane society for its resuscitation. A little trade was maintained by the sale of portable cholera, in the shape of green-gages; but the majority of the stalls were sadly in want of customers. Even the Waterloo-crackers, unable to go off in a commercial point of view, failed to do so in a pyrotechnical one. Had we waited until midnight, when all became still, we might possibly have beheld the shades of Richardson, Saunders, Polito, and Miss Biffin, with their more ancient brethren, Fawkes the conjuror, and Lee and Harper, waiting amongst the pens, or gathering together their audiences of old in shadowy bands to people the fair once more, as Napoleon collects his phantom troops in the Champs Elysées, where, since he has been buried in the Invalides, he must find it far more convenient to attend. But there was no inducement to stay until that period, and we left the fair about twenty minutes after we entered it, having seen everything that it contained, and deeming ourselves fortunate in having been only once violently compelled to buy a pound of gingerbread nuts, by the sheer force of a young lady who presided at the stall, and who appeared in a

state of temporary insanity, caused by the lack of customers and limited incomes of the majority of the visitors.

September 11, 1842.

BLANCHE HERIOT.

A LEGEND OF OLD CHERTSEY CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

Rise, and put on your foliage, and be seene
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and greene,
And sweet as Flora.

HERRICK.

HOW MAY-DAY WAS KEPT FOUR CENTURIES AGO.

CHERTSEY may be said to have outlived its antiquity. There are few records left of its former importance; and its once noble monastery has bequeathed little more to show us that it ever existed, than the detached *tessellæ*, which the ploughshare from time to time throws up. The only perfect memorial of its bygone power is the old bell which still hangs in the steeple of the church—whose sound still quivers and vibrates throughout the same tower which the good Abbot Rutherwick, amongst his other beneficent deeds, erected in the twelfth century.

No one knows how that ancient bell came to Chertsey, or whence was its origin. It is very very old, and its motto and quaint Saxon letters prove its antiquity. It probably swung, and clanged, and echoed from the turrets of the monastery centuries before the honest Abbot's time—it might have assisted to chime for his birth, and

it ushered him to the grave, in company with the other prelates who went before or succeeded him. The kingdom changed its rulers; usurpers rose and fell: war followed inaction, and peace supplanted war, yet still the old bell kept on its unchanging song, and rang for the conqueror as bravely and lustily as it had before welcomed the vanquished. Its morning sounds raised the hind from slumber to his daily toil; and at evening it pealed out the solemn curfew, which carried its voice of rest far over the broad expanse of wooded hill and rich pasture that then surrounded the monastery.

It was May-day, and the May of England in the olden time—such a fair season as awakened the numbers of our early poets, and produced those bland and honest verses in honour of the “sote monthe,” with which, in the joyousness of their hearts, they welcomed the coming of spring’s fairest handmaiden. Nor was this homely feeling of rural glee confined to the poets alone, for all the land partook of it. And when they saw the blossoms and buds bursting from their winter shelter, and breaking forth into life and vitality, their own unaffected hearts inspired the feeling from the wild flowers, and they felt the influence of May, and rejoiced at her coming, with the same outpouring of breathing gratitude and homage that the flowers evinced by their sweet odours.

The first green blush of spring was beginning to spread over the banches of the goodly trees, that encompassed a large smooth pasture in the immediate vicinity of the abbey, where we would lay the opening scene of our legend. Here and there, the hawthorn, and a few early shrubs, had pushed forth their full summer leaf; but the greater part of the greenwood owed its slightly verdant tint to the half-expanded buds, which awaited, as if

timidly, the more cherishing heat of summer to bring them to maturity. Natheless, the indications of approaching foliage were everywhere apparent, and the heavy blossoms of the fruit trees added in no small degree to the promise of a luxuriant and early season, which the rest of the vegetable world held forth; and showered down their petals, studding the green turf with their delicate leaflets, in company with the gentle daisies that peeped out from the grass to kiss the sunbeams.

A merry company had assmbled on this pasture to join in the May-day gambols; and the village (for Chertsey was a village then) appeared to have turned out its entire population to "don observance" to the festival. The shrill garrulity of age mingled with the light intonations of youth, and the full voice of manhood with the joyous silvery laugh of woman. Some were dancing in noisy glee around the tall shaft, which, decorated with field flowers, formed the maypole; and others, more intent upon personal embellishments, were trimming light wreaths of cowslips, to add to the attractions of their own rustic toilets. Various groups of happy laughing individuals were scattered about the enclosure, watching the sports of their companions; amidst whom, the sober forms of a few monks from the abbey, whose oriel commanded a view of the entire scene, were gravely walking about, bestowing an occasional 'benedicite' in reply to a passing salute; or anon casting a glance, that still savoured of this world, upon any rosy girl who chanced to cross their path.

Nor were the chief performers in the celebration absent. The alewife of '~~Dr~~ ~~Rose~~ ~~Hostelrie~~' had placed sundry benches in front of her dwelling, around which was collected a goodly crew of masks and mummers, who were

indulging in countless potations of good ale and hippocras, in the intervals of their performances round the may-shaft. The Jester presided over the entertainment; and, perched upon the back of a rude chair, with his red and yellow shoes upon the seat, was controlling, with his grotesquely-carved marotte, such outbreaks of misrule as a flow of good spirits tempted the others to give way to; Master Snap, the dragon, in his wicker envelope, was relating a sly jest to the Hobby-horse; Friar Tuck was flirting with Maid Marian; the Minstrel, with his pipe and tabor, was, in a subdued manner, and with an occasional glance of contempt at the village orchestra then performing, endeavouring to accompany Little John in his attempt to rehearse a species of ode which was meant for the edification of their audience, when the mumming-ring was again formed; and Robin Hood was tipping with elder-wood whistles a sheaf of reed-arrows that lay on a rough settle at his side. All was innocent mirth and hilarity, for increased education and refinement had not ruined the simplicity of the May revellers, nor spoilt their taste for harmless merry-making.

But although the scene of rustic gaiety was passing in an almost unheeded spot of the island, yet was it a sad time for England generally, for the date of our chronicle is the year 1471—the period of the hottest conflicts between the Roses of York and Lancaster. The want of newspapers, or circulated official accounts of the various changes as they occurred, compelled those not actually engaged in the strife, to depend upon the stories of the wandering chapman, or the rumours of the occasional traveller for information, as to what course the affairs of the kingdom were taking; and even in the present instance, the tidings of the bloody contest at Barnet,

although three weeks had elapsed since the engagement, were imperfectly understood by the majority of the people. It must not be supposed, however, that the villagers were careless as to the subsequent issue of the dispute, or that they felt no interest in the fortunes of the two parties. On the contrary, the least information was eagerly sought after, and a small red or white rose predominating in their rustic finery plainly betokened the cause which the wearer espoused, and silently spoke the sentiments of the individual, when open language would have been dangerous.

"Hast heard any news from the other side of London, reverend father?" asked a sober looking personage, of a monk who was passing at the instant.

"A worthy friar arrived at the monastery, from Hampshire, but yestere'en, Master Woodley, and brought us tidings of Queen Margaret," replied the monk. "She has left the sanctuary at Beaulieu and marched with some newly-collected troops, towards Gloucestershire. It was reported that the Duke of Somerset and Sir Thomas Fulford had formed the army during her retirement, and that they expected hourly additions to their force."

"May victory on the rightful side speedily end this fearful struggle," said Master Woodley.

"Amen," fervently rejoined the monk; and then, as if anxious to avoid further conversation on the subject, he added abruptly, "The villagers are slow to recommence their pastime—do they wait for anything?"

"They have chosen our fair beauty, Blanche Heriot, for their Queen of the May," replied a young man who now joined the party, "and her majesty not finding a consort to her mind, has not appeared to-day. I would gage my new jerkin against the Fool's hood, that her thoughts are

more with Margaret's army than our band of mummers. What say'st thou, holy father?"

"The thoughts of Mistress Heriot are known but to herself or her confessor," returned the monk calmly. And murmuring a "*pax vobiscum*," he bent his steps towards the Abbey.

"You have done wrong, Herrick, to question that good man so abruptly," said Master Woodley to his young companion.

"I did but hint at what all the world knows," rejoined the youth. "Neville Audeley is brought up with his cousin Blanche, and of course they fall in love with each other. Of course, also, Sir Mark Heriot does not approve of the match; and in consequence, the young squire goes off to the wars, to fill his purse with the gold nobles of the dead Yorkists: pray Heaven he may succeed, say I. Halloo there, Mistress Rummyn! a tankard of ale to pledge the Red Roses, and may the enemies of Lancaster be choked with the stalks!"

At the table towards which Herrick advanced, upon giving his orders to the hostess, were seated two men, whose dress formed a sorry contrast to the holiday-clad throng around them. They were apparently soldiers or the King's army, but their surcoats were torn and soiled, and their armour smeared with blood and dirt, bearing proofs of a hurried and recent journey. They took little notice of the bystanders, but conversed with each other in an under tone, and seemed anxious to avoid public gaze; scarcely moving their eyes from the ground, until the young man flung his hat carelessly upon the table, and repeated his wish in a louder key, as he raised the cup of humming liquor to his lips.

"Now, by my halidame, thou shalt rue thy pledge!"

exclaimed one of the strangers, as he started from his seat. "Who art thou, minion, thus to blazon thy rebellious notions to the world?"

"Oh, I am not ashamed to tell you!" replied the youth, placing the half-emptied tankard upon the table. "My name is Herrick Evenden, and my father is a skilful leech and a learned, dwelling in Chertsey. He looks forward to much practice among the maimed Yorkists, when our noble Somerset shall have beaten them from the field, like cravens as they are. Nay, draw not your weapon, my master—we are no swordsmen here; but if you wish me to let some of the hot blood from your brain with this beechen staff, take off your bascinet, and I will do my best."

Several of the bystanders, attracted by the dispute, had now gathered round the table, and some of the more peacefully inclined, knowing Evenden's madcap temperament, and fearing mischief, contrived to lead him away from his adversary, by dint of mingled threats and persuasions. The soldier, who had first addressed him, angrily sheathed his sword as he resumed his seat, and in a few minutes all went on as gaily as before.

"It is plain we are the first from the field," said the man-at-arms, in the same subdued tone he had before used to his companion. "These rebellious grubs have not heard of their defeat, or they would be more courteous. Mass! had they seen their vaunted Somerset split poor Wenlock's skull for doing nothing, they would not love him too much. The bird has not yet returned to his nest."

"And therefore is his capture certain," rejoined the other. "His only chance of safety is in escape to the Low Countries, and if, as we are told, he is a suitor of

this bright-eyed girl, he will assuredly take Chertsey in the line of his flight to the coast. 'Twill be no child's play if we meet him sword to sword. An you had seen him beat back the Duke of Gloucester when he pushed for the entrenchments, you would think the same."

"We need not fight him single-handed," replied the first speaker, smiling grimly. "I left my troop in small parties along the river's bank wherever it was fordable, and if he is not hewn down at once, they will be close upon the slot."

"The villages will ere long be weary of their pastime," observed his companion; "I would fain have them cleared away before the chase begins, for if they are affected towards our rebel, they may give us some little trouble yet. Come, Evered—another flagon to our success, and a long reign to King Edward!"

The pipe and drum sounded gaily, and the Dragon and Hobby-horse whirled and caracolled around the shaft amidst the shouts of their delighted and admiring audience. The fool winked, and threw out sly jests and leers at all the pretty maidens, until the ears of their rustic sweethearts tingled with jealousy; and anon, when they were tired with dancing, and drew around the hostelry for refreshment, the Minstrel chanted a homely ballad, in praise of their leader, Robin Hood, or detailing some of his bold adventures. But as the evening approached, the throng gradually withdrew; and when the stars began to twinkle in the deep blue sky the two soldiers were the only beings who remained near the inn; although a blaze of light gleaming upon their armour, and the sound of glad voices issuing from the interior, proved that some of the merry-makers had not yet concluded their day's amusement.

CHAPTER II.

The fearful time
Cuts off the ceremonious vows of love,
And ample interchange of sweet discourse,
Which so long-sunder'd friends should dwell upon.

SHAKSPEARE.

HOW NEVILLE AUDELEY RETURNED FROM THE WARS.

REDWYNDE COURT, the abode of Sir Mark Heriot, was, at the period we are writing of, a large cluster of irregular buildings, situate on the south bank of the Abbey river, within three hundred yards of the Monastery, and adjoining the causeway marked in the Exchequer ledger, from which it derived its name. Surrounded by broad and goodly pastures, except where the turrets of the Abbey and the habitations of the village interrupted the panorama, its upper stories commanded an extensive prospect over the adjoining country; and in the early feudal times it had ranked between a house and a castle, the entire edifice being encircled by a deep narrow fosse, crossed by a drawbridge. These defences had, however, been long neglected; and the ditch was dry and choked up with weeds, whilst the bridge, devoid of chains and levers, formed the permanent means of access to the mansion. The aspect of the whole range was somewhat dilapidated; for the owner, possessing an inherent dread of innovation, could ill afford, from severe and continued losses in the civil wars, to keep up the necessary establishment commensurate with the size of the house: and now that he was continually absent, taking his share in the troubles of the epoch, the place was falling piecemeal to decay—a sad emblem of the kingdom in general.

But if the greater part of the court was thus old and time-worn; if the rafters of the great hall were black and worm-eaten, and the tapestry discoloured by damp, or falling from the bare walls which it was intended to conceal, there were still some of the apartments that retained their pristine beauty, and were even decorated with the choicest articles of such rude luxury as the age produced. In one of these smaller rooms, which was fitted up as a private oratory, on the evening subsequent to the opening of our legend, a fair girl was kneeling on a *prie-dieu* before a small shrine in a recess of the chamber. The light of a solitary taper fell upon her features, which were of rare beauty; and partly divested of her day attire, as her long chesnut hair fell in heavy and unconfined curls over her white neck and shoulders, she appeared the living copy of one of those glorious impersonations of the Madonna, which the old Italian masters delighted to produce. Her prayer concluded, she arose, and seating herself at one of the small open casements of the room, gazed long and anxiously upon the country beneath her. It was a calm evening, and the moon was throwing the gothic spires of the Abbey into softened relief against the sky; whilst the only sound that broke the stillness, was the occasional burst of revelry from a party of late roysterers, or the solemn peal of the organ, as its tones floated on the breeze from the Monastery.

"Alas! he comes not yet!" she murmured in accents of despair, as she strained her eyes over the surrounding tract. "Neville, you have deceived me, or perhaps—" and bending down, she covered her fair face with her hands, as if ashamed that even the stars should watch her weeping.

An hour passed by, and still she remained at the win-

dow, in patient expectancy. At length, as the last chimes of midnight from the Abbey clock died away, the clatter of a horse's hoofs, apparently progressing at a furious rate, sounded amidst the general quietude. The noise approached, and now the rider and his steed were discernible on the causeway before the house. They thundered over the old timber of the bridge, and entered the court-yard. Here the horseman sprung from the saddle, as he checked the beast almost upon his haunches; and clamoured violently at the gate, until the aged and drowsy porter timidly admitted him, when, rushing upstairs, he flew along the old corridor, and entered the oratory.

"My own dear Blanche!" was all he could utter, as the next instant he clasped her to his heart.

"Oh, Neville!" cried the fair girl, throwing her delicate arms around the mail neck-piece of her lover; "I feared that you would not come back. We have heard sad rumours here of Margaret's losses, and I dreaded lest you should have fallen amongst her other hapless followers. But you are returned again, and I am happy. And the Queen—how fares it with her?"

"Blanche!" exclaimed the young man wildly, in breathless accents; "all is lost!" "We have been miserably defeated at Tewkesbury, and even now a price is upon my head, and the hounds are upon my track. Devonshire, Beaufort, Whittingham—all are slain, and Somerset has been dragged from the sanctuary of the Abbey church, and foully murdered. I must leave you, or my life is forfeited."

"Leave me!" ejaculated his fair companion, starting from his embrace, and gazing at him for an instant, as if bewildered at the intelligence; "oh, no, no—it may not

be : you know not what you say, or you are trifling with me. In our Lady's name what mean you, Neville ?”

“I have told you but too true,” replied Audeley. “My wretched comrades in arms have been hunted down like dogs, and they are pursuing me also. I came but to bid you farewell, dearest, before leaving for the Continent. A vessel leaves to-morrow for Ostend, and if I can reach her, I am safe.”

“You shall not go,” cried Blanche, clinging to him in the vain attempt to arrest his departure. “There are secret places and cellars in this house, where you can remain, and you shall be my prisoner. Neville—I implore you—do not leave me !”

“Tempt me not, Blanche,” returned Audeley, “or you will plunge us both into one common ruin. Hark !” he continued, as he drew her towards the casement ; “do you hear that noise ? It is the bay of the bloodhounds, crossing Laleham pasture, and the ruffians have discovered my route ! Nay, cling not so tightly—you know how precious each instant is to me. Farewell, dearest—perhaps for ever ;” and kissing her pale cheek, as he disengaged himself from her embrace, he rushed from the oratory. For one instant after his departure, Blanche remained fixed, as if bereft of consciousness, with quivering lip and vacant eye ; then uttering one shrill cry of agony, she fell senseless upon the oaken floor of the chamber.

With the swiftness of lightning Audeley flew down the staircase, and, well acquainted with the numerous passages of the house, made his way to the court-yard. But some of the royalist troops, including the two soldiers whom we left at the holstery, were already there. A yell of triumph broke forth from the party, at the sight of

their prey; and Neville had barely time to retire within the porch, and close the massy door after him, when they reached the house.

Aware that resistance was useless, with the paucity of means of defence at his disposal, and that his only chance of safety remained in flight, he hurriedly drew one of the bolts to cause a trifling delay, and again rapidly ascended the staircase. Turning to the left, on the first landing, he pushed back a small panel and entered the gallery that ran round the upper part of the hall, just as his pursuers broke open the door. A moment of keen suspense followed. He heard their heavy and confused tramp, as they followed his course up the stairs, and was for an instant in hopes that they would overlook his refuge, and give him time to gain the court-yard whilst they were searching the other rooms of the house; nor was he less anxious on Blanche's account, fearing that she might receive some insult from the rough marauders. But as the party ascended, the hound that preceded them, stopped short at the panel by which Neville had entered the gallery, and set up a deep continued howl. The royalists were not long in sounding the wainscot with their partizans, and discovering the sliding-door, soon demolished it.

"Keep back the dog, Evered," cried one of the soldiers, "or he will tear him to pieces, and we would rather—"

But before the speaker could conclude, Neville discharged his petronel, and the soldier fell back dead amongst his comrades. The dog, at the same moment, flew towards Neville, and attempted to fasten on his shoulder: but the armour was proof against his teeth, and with an effort of gigantic strength, he threw him

over the gallery into the hall beneath, with such force that, after a few convulsive throbs, the beast lay dead on the floor.

The soldiers, who had fallen back at the death of their comrade, now pushed forward again through the panel, and Neville darted along the gallery to the other end of the hall. To the middle of the ceiling a long chain was attached, to suspend the lamp from; and this, for the convenience of lighting, was drawn towards the side of the gallery, and there fastened. Desperate with the impending danger, he seized the chain firmly, and cutting asunder the thong that tied it, with his poignard, laid hold with both hands, and swung boldly into the centre of the lofty hall, just as the Yorkists filled the gallery. Gliding swiftly down the chain, he dropped upon the table of the hall, in the midst of a shower of bullets from the arquebusses above, which, however, flew harmlessly around him. To gain the court-yard was the work of an instant, and darting along the bridge, he fled in the direction of the Monastery, guided by the lights in the windows, which showed that the monks were then celebrating the nocturnal mass.

On perceiving that Neville had eluded their grasp, the soldiers immediately retraced their steps; and, on emerging from the house, caught sight of him as he fled towards the Abbey. A shout of encouragement was again raised, and the party was once more engaged in a hot pursuit. The light chain mail which Neville wore gave him some small advantage over the heavy-armed soldiery, and he had placed a good hundred yards between him and his pursuers, when he reached the holy edifice. But the entrance was still separated from him by a high wall, which it was impossible for him to scale, and only

one resource was left. Climbing up the fretted gothic carving of the buttress, he contrived to gain a footing in the recess of one of the windows: and clinging to the heavy mullion, he beat down, with his mailed arm and foot, the leaden casement, which fell inwards upon the floor of the chapel, shivered into a thousand pieces.

"A sanctuary! a sanctuary! for the love of the Virgin!" cried the breathless fugitive to the monks, who, petrified with astonishment at his unexpected apparition, had clustered round the Abbot at the grand altar. "You know me, Father Angewin,"* he continued, as he leaped down into the transept, crushing the glass beneath his feet: "you know me, and I claim the protection of the Holy Church—it will not, I trust, be refused to a soldier of the ill-fated house of Lancaster."

"You are welcome," replied the Abbot calmly, recovering from his surprise, as he led Neville within the rails of the shrine. "Pray, my son—pray, that the hearts of those who oppress you may be turned to mercy."

The asylum gained, Audeley sank exhausted at the foot of the altar. The swell of the organ again rose through the lofty aisles of the chapel, and the monks were about to recommence the service, which the intrusion had interrupted, when a fresh clamour was heard without, and a man-at-arms appeared directly afterwards in the window, by which Neville had entered.

"Father Abbot," cried the soldier, "you harbour a rebel to our liege sovereign. I call upon you in the name of King Edward, to deliver him into our hands."

* Thomas Angewin was, according to Tanner's *Notitia Monastica*, Abbot of Chertsey Monastery, A.D. 1458, and was re-elected, A.D. 1465.

"He has thrown himself upon the Church, and claimed a sanctuary," replied the Abbot.

"I care not," rejoined the soldier, bluntly. "The Abbey Church of Tewkesbury afforded no protection to the Grand Prior of St. John, nor shall the Monastery of Chertsey harbour a rebel of inferior rank. Restore him, or we will drag him from the altar."

"Hold, infidel!" cried Neville, as he advanced into the body of the church. "It would be a grievous thing were the sanctuary of Chertsey Abbey to be violated, and its power mocked, upon my account. I ask your assurance for my safety until the curfew rings to-morrow night. If you have not then received a royal message to the contrary, I will accompany you to execution."

The soldier turned to confer with his comrades, who were clustered outside the window where he stood. After a minute's delay he rejoined,

"Let it be so, then : but remember—if by to-morrow's curfew you have no warrant of the king's mercy, your head rolls upon the Abbey mead. Farewell, holy fathers," he added, with careless levity, as he turned to depart ; "shrive your new inmate anon, for his fate is well nigh sealed."

And in five minutes more the Yorkists had departed, and the monks proceeded with the service which had been thus strangely interrupted.

CHAPTER III.

Trembling in the realm of sound,
It mounts! it mounts! it shakes!
The first vibration wakes!

SCHILLER.

HOW BLANCHE DELAYED THE CURFEW.

HERRICK EVENDEN, in spite of his quarrel with the two soldiers of Edward's army, did not feel at all disposed to enjoy himself the less on that account, and he therefore waited carousing at the Rose Hostelrie, after the evening had set in, until he found himself publicly stating that he was the rightful successor to the throne after all. Whereupon, inclining to the belief that his brain was becoming slightly confused, from the quantity of corned beef he had indulged in, he began to think of going home. He consequently rose to depart, and after wandering somewhat vaguely amongst the scattered houses that then formed the village, he reached his abode, guided by the small lamp that twinkled in the laboratory of his father; who, besides being a learned leech or physician, was accounted cunning in the occult sciences, and a skilful alchymist, having worked out a notable powder of projection, by which gold could be converted into lead—a discovery which did not lead to the profitable results which he had anticipated would accrue from it.

The young reveller retired to bed upon arriving at home, leaving his father poring over a small crucible in his furnace; and after a quarter of an hour's confused musing, fell into a deep sleep. He was dreaming he saw King Edward's head on the top of the may-pole, and that the villagers were shooting at it with their arbalists in

turn, instead of a popinjay, when he was awakened, after a short slumber, by a hurried knocking at the porch door. As soon as he could collect his ideas, he sprang out of bed, and throwing open his casement, demanded the cause of the intrusion, when he was somewhat surprised at his challenge being answered in a soft tremulous voice, begging earnestly for admission.

Herrick immediately hurried on a few articles of dress, and descended to the laboratory for a light, which he was just able to procure, as his father had fallen asleep over his task, and the contents of the crucible had bubbled over into a white efflorescence upon the few live embers that remained. Thinking that the old man's services might be required, he aroused him, and then proceeded to open the door and admit the patient, or whoever else it might be that sought him at so unreasonable a time. His surprise was not diminished when the pale, terror-stricken features of Blanche Heriot met his gaze.

"Mistress Heriot!" cried both father and son, at the same time. "For heaven's sake tell us what brings you here at this hour of the night?"

"Oh, I shall go mad, Master Evenden," cried the terrified girl, as she threw herself upon a settle, and pressed her hand upon her forehead. "My brain seems turning round, and still the horrid object is before my eyes."

"Compose yourself, my dear young lady," said the old leech, kindly, as he took her hand; "you are with friends here. Has Sir Mark returned from a skirmish wounded, or are any of your retainers stricken with illness?"

"There is a horrid corpse on the staircase," replied Blanche, wildly, "by the panel leading to the hall gallery. Its head is shattered in the helmet, and the blood has

dripped and clotted on the steps. I was obliged to cross it as I came down, and it grinned at me—I see it laughing now!”—and she buried her face in her mantle, as if to shut out the dreadful vision.

In a few minutes she became sufficiently collected to relate to Master Evenden and his son the principal occurrences of the night. It appeared that, after the soldiers had quitted the house, she had gone over to the Monastery for succour, and was astonished to find Neville there, in sanctuary. He had explained to her the fearful position in which he was placed, and likewise the hope he still cherished of ultimate escape. At the commencement of the conflict at Tewkesbury, when the Duke of Gloucester, who commanded the first line of Edward’s army, attempted to carry the half-finished entrenchment which Margaret had thrown up, the Yorkists had been repulsed with considerable slaughter, through the intrepidity of the Duke of Somerset. At this period a wounded nobleman of the opposite party fell at Audeley’s side, and was about to be speared by one of the Lancastrian soldiers, had not Neville ordered him to desist, and dragged his fallen foe from the *mêlée*, under cover of the bank. The nobleman, struck by the generous act, had drawn a ring from his finger, and given it to Neville, telling him, he might upon emergency, claim a favour from Edward, by presenting, or sending the ring to him.

“And now,” continued Blanche, “upon the success of this mission his life hangs. You have long been attached to him, Herrick Evenden, and to you alone would he commit the trust—will you save him?”

“By the mass, lady,” returned Herrick, “were I to ride a hurdle to Tower Hill, with nothing but a short shrift and a long halter for my reward when I got there, I

would do it to save Neville Audeley from the clutches of these knaves, whose livers are as pale as their own roses. Where is the ring ?”

“It is here,” replied Blanche, drawing a costly jewel from her forefinger, bearing the Beaufort crest; “preserve it as you would your life! And now Herrick, depart—there is a fleet horse at Redwynde, which awaits your coming. Spare neither whip nor steed, I implore you, but seek out King Edward if he has returned to London, and claim this from him. And remember—the *Curfew* is *Neville’s death-peal* !

“It shall not ring his knell to night, however,” said Herrick, as he received the ring. “Father, you will accompany Mistress Blanche to the Monastery, await my return. Nay,; care not for your chymicals, we have a deeper stake to win! Farewell !”

And the cold grey dawn of morning was breaking over Chertsey and its Abbey as Herrick crossed the Thames, in the ferry-boat, and flying over the wide Range, turned his horse’s bridle towards London.

A day of keen anxiety to Blanche and her lover followed the young villager’s departure. As soon as he had left Redwynde Court, she returned to the Monastery, and endeavoured, as well as her state of mind would allow, to cheer Neville, with the anticipation of a certain pardon from Edward. But as afternoon advanced, and Herrick returned not, her spirits drooped. Every time she heard the sound of footsteps approaching the Abbey she rushed to the gate, in the hope of greeting her messenger: each time she came back with a sadden heart to Neville’s chamber. The shadows of the old stained windows crept along the chequered floor of the aisles in increasing length as the sun went down, and yet there

were no tidings of Herrick ; and when the monks assembled for the vespers, at six o'clock, the suspense of the young couple became painfully acute. Neither spoke, for they had exhausted their mutual consolation, and a few stifled sobs from Blanche alone broke the silence, except when the chimes from the bell tower announced the progress of the day ; at which periods she clung closer to Neville, and uttered some subdued exclamations of despair. Seven ! the hours flew like seconds ; it was already dusk, and the monks were again entering the chapel for the *compline*, or concluding service of the day. Lights appeared one by one in the windows of the village houses ; the candles at the altars threw back the reflection of the armour, and scarfs of those who slept below the pavement, in glimmering shadows upon the walls ; and the Yorkists began to assemble in the Mead, waiting the surrender of their prisoner.

The bell tower of the Abbey commanded an extensive view over the surrounding flat ; it was the same prospect which we now see from church, only there were no enclosures, but a few rough bridle-roads running towards various points over the open country. To the summit of this tower Blanche had frequently ascended during the day, with the expectation of catching a distant sight of Herrick as he approached the river, but even this consolation was now precluded by the increasing darkness.

The three-quarters had sounded some minutes, when footsteps were approaching the chapel. Neville started up at the sound, and prepared to receive his enemies, when the Abbot Angewin entered.

"One of our brethren," said the good father, "has descried a light moving in the direction of the ferry. It

is probably Master Evenden—pray heaven that he may arrive quickly.”

“And the hour, father—the hour?” cried Neville, anxiously.

“In five minutes the curfew will toll,” replied the Abbot, with solemn emphasis. “Should this be Herrick, my son, your fate hangs on a few seconds.”

“But can we not delay the bell?” demanded Blanche, as, trembling with horror, she rose from the stone bench on which she was seated.

“It is impossible,” returned the Abbot; “the church is surrounded by soldiers; and who could hinder their determination?”

“I will!” cried Blanche, struck with a sudden inspiration. “Neville, if this be Herrick Evenden, you will still be saved. Delay me not,” she added, as she darted across the chapel, “each moment is of untold value. Holy Virgin! succour and protect me!”

Hurriedly bending to one of the altars as she quitted the sanctuary, without a word of explanation either to Neville or the Abbot, Blanche flew across the piece of ground that separated the Monastery from the church, and arrived at the foot of the tower. As Father Angewin had stated, there were several soldiers loitering about the spot, and a light in the belfry reflected one or two of their forms, in gigantic stature, upon the ceiling. Entering a doorway in the western wall of the tower, Blanche passed the steps leading to the lower belfry, wherein the ropes of the bells hung down, and came to a low stone arch that led to the winding staircase, by which part of the tower was ascended. She was now in total darkness, but her energy increased with her progress. Old Master Evenden had once taken her up when a child,

to see the prospect, and she still retained a confused recollection of the localities. She felt her way before her, and gained the bottom stair, from which, keeping the central pillar for her guide, she rapidly wound up the flight. The steps were crumbling with time and wear; noisome insects clung to the walls, and the bats, disturbed by the intrusion, flapped their sleepy wings against her as she passed. But still Blanche kept on her breathless way, and in a few seconds more had reached the first platform of the tower. A faint light, through a loophole in the wall, showed her the situation of the rude ladder by which she climbed to the second floor, but here it was again quite dark. She felt about for the second ladder, and, after some little difficulty, succeeded in reaching the bell chamber, where some open gothic windows once more permitted a dim light to enter, and revealed the indistinct outline of the bells, as they hung in sullen power from their frameworks. Seizing the ladder by which she had ascended, with a strength that appeared superhuman for her delicate form, she contrived to turn it over, and throw it down upon the floor beneath; by which she knew a delay of a few minutes would be gained, in the event of pursuit. As she achieved this effort, the bell nearest her—it was the old Saxon one—began to move! Its woodwork creaked, and the large wheel to which the rope was attached turned half round; at the same instant Blanche saw through the window, a light shining in the distance, and apparently moving at a rapid pace, across the wild tract of ground between the church and the river. Heedless of the large dark mass of metal that was beginning to swing backwards and forwards with fearful and threatening impetus, she crouched down beneath it, and clung to its iron tongue with the

grasp of a drowning creature. The motion of the bell increased, as its timbers groaned and quivered with the strain; and Blanche's arms, torn and bleeding from the rough walls she had passed in her ascent, were contused and beaten against the sides. But she still kept her hold, and a deadened sound, like a cathedral bell at an extreme distance, was all that arose, as she was thrown violently from side to side, with the rocking of the framework. It swung higher and higher—it was evident that additional hands were assisting the bell-ringer below! Now she was dragged from the floor, and again dashed violently down, but to be once more caught up on the other side; yet still she flinched not, hanging to the clapper with unwearying power. Suddenly the motion of the bell ceased; it was plain that the people had relinquished their task, and were about to ascend the tower to see what was amiss; the ladder might delay them a minute or two, and then all would be lost! But as the bell ceased to vibrate a sound arose from the street, that threw fresh courage into Blanche's almost failing heart; it was the cry of voices rejoicing. She reached the window and looked down upon the Abbey; a hundred torches, borne by the monks, shed their light around, and in the centre of them a figure on horseback, was waving his cap above his head, with a gesture of triumph. Neville was saved!

Little now remains to be told. Delayed by various unforeseen difficulties, Herrick had at length obtained audience with Edward, and delivered the ring, which proved to be the gift of Lord Beaufort, who had commanded one of the divisions of his army at Tewkesbury. That nobleman had implored the pardon from the king, and the messenger would have arrived at the Monastery

in the afternoon had not his steed foundered from sheer fatigue. But now all was fairly accomplished, and as Neville clasped his fair Blanche to his heart, they forgot all that had passed, in the thrilling joy of the present. As for Herrick Evenden, he rushed to the Rose Hostellerie, and distributed so much sack to the villagers there assembled, including the sexton of the church, that the curfew was not rung that evening until nearly midnight, when the merry party all marched off to the belfry together, and each seizing a rope, performed a concert of their own, of so extraordinary a nature, that even the worthy old alchymist started from his furnace, and listened at his door, in the firm belief that a troop of evil spirits were fighting with the bells.

A short time afterwards, before the may-pole flowers had well faded, a joyous peal sounded from Chertsey Church, as Neville Audeley, having obtained her father's consent, led his young bride from the altar. And when, at last, Sir Mark Heriot died—when the old mansion was put in order, and the times became more peaceable, the happy pair gathered their friends around them, in the old Hall at Christmas, and by the blazing wood fire, that crackled and sparkled on the large iron dogs of the ample hearth, Neville would tell the story of his flight down the same chain that still hung from the roof; and Blanche recounted her struggle with the old bell, until its sounds warned them that the night was far advanced, and reminded them, ere they retired to rest, of the pious orison that was graven round it—which the curious visitor may still see in unimpaired freshness.

The response of the prayer ran thus:—

Ora mente pia pro nobis, Virgo Maria.

SOME PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF
MR. PIMONY SKUFFLE.

THAT the tributary events which magnify the importance of the stream of our lives, proceed from many unsuspected and trivial sources, is an axiom as old as the days of Homer; when that respectable poet toddled out of the *Café des Aveugles* (Καταλυμα τῶν τυφλῶν) at Athens, half inebriated with Chian wine, and followed his dog into the nearest stationer's shop, to buy a quire of cheap outside papyrus, on which to commence his Iliad. So, in more modern times, if Mr. Skuffle had not been caught one day in the rain, during a pedestrian tour which he undertook from Tottenham Court Road to the Bank, he would not have gone to live at the retired village of Chorturmut, and met with the events which there befel him, and of which we are the humble chronicler.

Mr. Pimony Skuffle was a bachelor young gentleman, of six-and-twenty; thin, dyspeptic, and interesting. On the death of his father, (which circumstance occurred soon after he, the aforesaid Pimony, came of age,) he found himself possessed of an income of fifty pounds a-year; and he, moreover, enjoyed a situation in Aldermanbury, worth about seventy more; so that by adding the two together, he contrived to reside in a boarding-house in the neighbourhood of Fitzroy-square; to enjoy the society of certain old ladies there vegetating, of the true boarding-house cut, with light false fronts, cold grey eyes, faded head-dresses, ranking half way between the cap and turban, and countenances like the masks Mr. Yarnold so pleasantly assumes when he plays

Mother Holly or Mother Bunch in the opening scene of a Covent Garden harlequinade; and, finally, to treat himself occasionally to the play, or the gallery of the Opera, when it was a fine night, and an attractive representation.

One morning at breakfast, as Mr. Skuffle was running his eye over the pages of the day before yesterday's *Times*, his attention was suddenly arrested by seeing his name attached to an advertisement, at the head of the second column, amongst the "E's," who were requested to return immediately, and the "H's," who were assured everything would be arranged to their satisfaction; the said paragraphs being, moreover, generally most appropriately placed on a level with the notices of ships about to sail for Botany Bay. The advertisement, which quickened Mr. Skuffle's circulation, ran as follows:—

"*Next of kin.*—If the *next of kin* of Mr. *Grimsby Skuffle*, who, in 1815, lived at Bampton Muzzard, in Somersetshire, will apply to Messrs. Flamflat and Bibikins, solicitors, Gray's Inn Square, they will *hear of something* to their advantage."

The egg—it was a shop one—that Pimony was about to discuss, remained uncracked; the coffee rested where the maiden aunt of the mistress of the boarding house, who got up early to make breakfast for the first comers down, had placed it; and, without uttering a syllable to any one, in explanation of this uncommon circumstance, Mr. Skuffle bolted from the table, at the same time that he bolted a bit of new bread, which nearly choked him, and in seventeen minutes from that period he had gained the sober precincts, the law-inspiring quadrangle, of Gray's Inn Square. It is not necessary to describe the lawyers, their clerks, nor their chambers. A master

hand has so inimitably portrayed them, that sooner than strive to give any new features to the subject, we should attempt to write an improved version of the Waverley Novels; besides, all chambers and all clerks are alike; *ex uno disce omnes*. It is sufficient for us to inform the reader, that an elder brother of Pimony's father had died intestate, at Bumpton Muzzard, after quarrelling with all his family in succession; that, in addition, he had no children; and that, finally, the amount of £12,000 fell to our hero, who as much expected it as he did a shower of cloth boots when the barometer fell to "change."

For some time after the information Pimony was completely bewildered: he could form no idea of possessing so much money without working for it. His father had entertained a great idea, that everybody should labour unceasingly, in order to be a respectable character in the world; and, accordingly, he placed Pimony in a warehouse as soon as he left school, where he sat on a very high stool all day long, before a flaring gas-light, and behind an opaque window, making figures between perpendicular lines, in great books, and listening to the tin whirligig that twizzled all day long in the counting-house door. Under these circumstances, it may be conceived that his ideas were, for a short time, as perfectly conglomerated as a potted bloater; he scarcely believed it; and when, at last, he convinced himself of the truth, he indulged in the most pleasing reflections, as he journeyed home. "And shall I," thought he, "be able to have four suits a-year, without returning the old ones? And will it make no difference to me whether I give six-and-threepence for my hats in Bread-street, or six-and-twenty under the Quadrant? Shall I be able to sup at the Albion, without hesitating to order two more poached

eggs, or another Welch-rabbit, because it adds an extra eightpence to the reckoning? All this I can do, and more." And hereupon he began to build such castles, that, quite forgetful of himself, he turned up six wrong courts, and knocked over two baked-potato cans, before he arrived at home.

But 12,000*l.* does not tumble into your pockets as you sit at home with your feet on the fender, even if it be left you. Accordingly, many journeys did Mr. Skuffle take before he could really call the money his own, much to the detriment of his shoe-leather; although this last circumstance was not of much consequence to him now; indeed, he had already begun to think, with feelings of contempt, upon his accustomed fourteen-shilling short Wellingtons, and indulge in bright dreams of glazed boots, with green upper-leathers, and channelled soles, fresh with brilliancy from the *depôts* of Gradelle, M'Donnell, or Lehocq: and he even thought about discarding his ready-made pea-coat, and having a new Taglioni built, of the colour of consumptive blotting-paper.

Mr. Skuffle, in common with most clerks, entertained a great love of the country, and rural pleasures. He looked upon it as the *El Dorado* of cockney delight; and his wildest visions of future greatness had been limited to living in a neat cottage, and listening all day long to the hum of bees, the songs of birds, the lowing of cows, the bells of sheep, the sharpening of scythes, and a perpetual succession of fine weather, eternal summer, and never-dying trees and flowers; just, in fact, what every Londoner thinks the country is.

He was journeying, one morning, from Oxford-street towards the Bank, upon some transfer business, when he was suddenly overtaken by a violent shower in Holborn.

Not a cab or coach was on the stand, when he got up to it, for they had all been instantaneously engaged by the more proximate pedestrians; and the omnibus-drivers and cads shook their heads with provoking and hard-hearted coolness, in answer to his hail, as their unwieldy vehicles, filled with damp inmates to the last point of suffocation, "and no more," swayed their ponderous bulk on the groaning pavement. In this dilemma, he did what Grammont did, in England, when he was driven from France—he took refuge in a court, but merely for a short period—*un court séjour*, as the Frenchman would have said.

When 'people are waiting about for rain, or a stage-coach, it is astonishing what foolish things in the shops attract their attention, and comparatively amuse them. How many, similarly situated at the White Horse Cellar, have loitered, with intense delight, before the window of the whip and fishing-tackle shop at the corner; nay, they have found the inspection of the different samples of tea in Decastro's window beguile several weary minutes; and the names of the different places and times on the coach-bills have been immensely entertaining.

It was with this feeling that Mr. Skuffle ran his eye over the contents of the window of a house-agent, at the corner of the court where he was sheltered; and, after reading various neatly stencilled announcements of houses to let, with immediate possession, in eligible parts of the town, his attention fell upon a small plan of a cottage *ornée*, with garden, paddock, and fish-pond; green pales and hurdle fences, "situated in the pleasant village of Chorturmut, within sight of the Great Western Railway," (it could be discerned with a telescope, on the horizon, when the air was clear,) "to be let for a term of three,

five, or seven years, furnished or unfurnished, with or without the land," &c.

These were certainly very accommodating conditions, and he determined to inquire a little about it. Having got all particulars from the agent, he placed the whole arrangement in the hands of Messrs. Flamflat and Bibikins, in order that everything might be properly conducted. Of course, there was some little delay in the business, for that is always necessary to the importance which law proceedings are expected to assume; but, matters being finally settled, Mr. Skuffle bade adieu to London and Cateaton-street, to take possession of his new estate. He did not leave, however, without giving his fellow-clerks a farewell supper at the Peacock, in Maiden-lane, where his health was proposed and drunk with nine times nine, and "again, again, again," after it; and one of the clerks' friends, who was not invited, but brought because he was "an out-and-out brick," sang such droll songs that everybody said it was better than anything they had ever heard at the Eagle, or anywhere else: and afterwards played a tune with a tobacco-pipe on the table, and danced a hornpipe on his head, with his heels in the air, on a stool placed for the purpose in the middle of the room: but this was not until after the sixth bowl of punch. They separated, finally, at half-past four in the morning, each with somebody else's hat; leaving the senior clerk holding a warm argument with a policeman at the corner of Catherine-street, upon the comparative value of Spanish Bonds and scalloped oysters; and then offering to treat him to coffee at the stall of the very-early-rising old lady, who opens her *restaurant* every morning, at the corner of the inclined court that runs up all of a slant by the side of the Adelphi

Theatre. Mr. Skuffle himself gave six distinct invitations to the same number of his companions, to come and stay a fortnight each with him, and also to bring with them everybody jolly they knew; and the rest of the company took it into their heads to walk up to Hampstead, and see the sun rise; except two men, one of whom, being very tipsy, was packed off home in a cab; the other, who was not much better, going with him to take care that he came to no harm, and to help him pull his boots off.

In a few weeks, Mr. Skuffle was quietly settled in the country, having found the place, for a wonder, almost as good as the advertisement described it. He now determined to give himself up for a while to the charms of rural retirement, and amuse his leisure by inventing and superintending various minor improvements about his residence, such as country gentlemen so much delight in. But, if an independent bachelor, with anything like a fixed income, thinks he can do as he likes with himself, or his time, he is very much mistaken indeed. No sooner had Mr. Skuffle been to church—no sooner had the clergyman and the doctor called on him—no sooner had it got abroad that his house was in order, and that he was ready to receive company, than a crowd of visitors, anxious to make his acquaintance, beset his doors; and every mamma in the vicinity, with marriageable daughters, set the young ladies at him, caps, habit-shirts, cambric cuffs, and all; so that, before he saw through their designs, he wondered at the similarity of ideas and pursuits that all the fair creatures possessed. First of all, when his two rhododendrons, before the parlour window, were in bloom, every young lady in the neighbourhood requested permission to come and see them, because she was *so* fond of botany; although there were much finer

plants at the nurseryman's on the top of the hill, which she never went near. Next, after he sprained his foot, one day, in clambering over the logs of wood in the out-house, to see if he could average how many billets the neighbouring cottagers carried away for their fires during the week, in a few days fourteen pairs of worsted slippers arrived, worked in all sorts of rainbow zigzags, and harlequin triangles, by as many different manufacturers; and as for purses and patchwork table-covers, the number was quite incredible. Truth to tell, it was generally at the suggestion, or rather order, of the mothers, that these presents came; for we must state, in justice to the young ladies of the present day, that they are generally very much inclined to have a will of their own, in all affairs of the heart; which will is always at the most eccentric variation with that of their parents.

For a while, Mr. Skuffle heroically defied their constant siege; he was polite to all, and no more. Of so many shots, however, all aimed at the same unfortunate target, one was sure to hit, and so it proved in the present case. At the nearest farm-house on the common there resided a very worthy man, named Sparrow; and the assiduous attention of his wife and three daughters was so unremitting, that Pimony was obliged to capitulate. Mr. Sparrow had been, originally, a labourer; but, by industry and economy, he had made his own fortune. Wishing that his family should keep the same station in society by their education, which he had attained by his good name, he placed his daughters in a ladies' school at Hammer-smith, where they had the advantage of all sorts of masters; were allowed to contribute to the plate-basket of the principal; took six towels and a prayer-book; and walked two-and-two every fine afternoon across Turnham

Green. Here they picked up so many odd notions, that poor old Sparrow was quite bewildered when they first came home, but, at last, like the eels and their skins, gradually got used to it. A curious assemblage of articles their drawing-room presented. The principal part of the furniture was in the regular old mahogany, farm-house style; with the wine-glasses, rummers, salt-cellars, and punch-bowls, ranged in recesses on each side of the fire-place, and backed by gigantic tea-boards; and, in the middle of the room there was a round table covered with albums, annuals, little cats made out of shells and putty, butterfly pen-wipers, and all sorts of other fancy gimcracks, that the young ladies brought home every "half" to sell for their mistress, and to say they had made them themselves. Rarely did their father approach this table, and, if by chance the good man left his pipe, or book of farm-accounts, on it, he got such a scolding as, for a long time, prevented a repetition of the offence. Anne and Fanny, the two eldest girls, were most decidedly plain, but "very amiable," (as, fortunately, plain girls always are;) and, upon the whole, not so well educated as Emma, their younger sister, who was pretty and coquettish. The careful views of Mrs. Sparrow, with regard to establishing her daughters, were principally confined to the last young lady; first, because she thought the others would make very good wives for some of the young farmers in the neighbourhood; secondly, because she imagined Mr. Skuffle would more readily fall in love with Emma; and, thirdly, because she was anxious to stop some clandestine sort of an engagement which, report said, was going on between that young lady and a sort of second or third cousin, who had been denied the house, because he was so very wild and improvident—

riding at steeple-chases, and hurdle-races, keeping subscription hounds; and making a perpetual racket in the village.

After a few ceremonious calls, the parties got more familiar, and Mr. Skuffle accepted an invitation from Mrs. Sparrow, to drop in, occasionally, on an evening for "a little music." Oh! that "little music"—how many bachelors have fallen victims to its influence! It is dangerous to turn over the leaves of a music-book, whilst a pretty girl plays a set of quadrilles, or a *suite* of waltzes, especially if she has a beautiful arm and hand; it is worse to listen to her as she sings, if she does not make faces, and has a melodious voice; but, once come to a duet with her—once attempt "La ci darem," or "I've wandered in dreams," with her, and, if it is not all up with you, you are, indeed, hard-hearted.

The snare was set, and Mr. Skuffle was caught—at least she thought so. The mamma Sparrow had made a bold stroke; but, although she played for a winning hazard, the ball never reached the pocket. It was a love game between her and her daughter, and the fair Emma won it.

* * * * *

A country village! What visions of delight do the rurality-seeking inhabitants of London couple with the idea of a residence in that almost *terra incognita*!—what a pleasing illusion is dispelled when they get to live there! Its petty jealousies; its twaddling round of small visiting; its deplorably uninteresting and injurious gossip; its prying curiosity and ill-natured comparisons; its crouching spirit of dependance, and guarded caution of "neighbours' eyes;" and its rulers and dominators, who prefer acting the storks amongst the frogs—the monarchs

of a set of clowns, to being the unheeded nobodies of a London circle.

There is one blessing attendant upon a residence in the country, which the inhabitants of the great metropolis cannot enjoy. Should you require advice, should you be undecided how to act in any affair of importance, closely touching yourself, you can apply to your neighbours. Rest assured they are better, far better informed of the state of your concerns than you are yourself; and their careful minds have studied every bearing of your case, long before you yourself thought about it. So it chanced with Mr. Pimony Skuffle. As soon as the stiffness of a new acquaintanceship began to wear off, his constant visits to Mr. Sparrow's furnished fresh themes for the good people of Chorturmut, to discuss at the little tea-and-turn-out *coteries* that they so liked to indulge in. Miss Pinkey, the old maid, who paid the widow lady fifty-five pounds a year for her board, which sum the old lady was glad to receive, "because agreeable society and a cheerful home were required, more than remuneration," lived nearly opposite to Mr. Sparrow's, and, consequently, was enabled to keep a correct account of Pimony's visits; whilst the old lady's maid used to walk home from meeting, on a Sunday night, with Mrs. Sparrow's maid, and, having compared notes all the while, used to retail all she had heard while she laid the cloth for supper, and put the pickled cabbage out of the big brown jar that was kept in the side closet, into little crockery leaves adorned with the three tiny mandarins without legs, going over a bridge, and another amusing himself, in a species of floating dog-kennel, on the water, and two double-tailed birds fighting at the top. Now, all this taken into consideration, Pimony was reported to be in,

love, engaged, and about to be married ; nay, he was personally congratulated before such an idea had thoroughly entered his head, much to the annoyance of the old woman who superintended his domestic concerns ; entertaining, as she did, in common with all her class, an intense horror of a new mistress being brought home, to see how much Dorset butter and moist sugar was consumed a-week in the kitchen, and what became of all the cold roast beef that went out of the parlour the day before.

There is, however, an old saying, as vulgar as old, and as true as vulgar, which teaches us, that “there is never a splash of mud, but some sticks ;” and so, at last, the reports of Mr. Skuffle’s attachment to Miss Sparrow, although vague and exaggerated, were built on some slight foundation of truth ; the rest was all the lath and plaster of imagination. He had certainly commenced a series of frequent visits to the worthy farmer’s, and he had even invited them back tolerably often, in return, to his house ; and, by some unaccountable attraction, equally mysterious as the electro-magnetism, or some other polytechnic mystery, he always found himself next to Emma at table, or at her side as they walked about the garden. The mamma Sparrow, and the two “plain and amiable” daughters, were miracles of management in this respect. They never interfered with the *tête-à-têtes*, but always withdrew, with the most praiseworthy intention, when Pimony and the young lady were in conversation. Or if there was a gipsying party formed to the Sheepleas, or any other romantic spot at a small distance from Chor-turmut, Mr. Skuffle was always requested to drive Emma in the gig, “because she did not like going in the waggon much,” which dislike afforded her mother an opportunity

of descanting on her daughter's genteel notions and refined ideas; but this was to Pimony in confidence.

What with perpetually hearing Emma's praises sung by Mrs. Sparrow, and chorused by her daughters; what with turning over the leaves of her music-book every time she sat down to her piano; what with everybody perpetually telling him how amiable and good a wife she would make—what a perfect treasure she would be to any young man, Mr. Skuffle, at last, believed it himself. His attentions became more marked as the attentions of the family redoubled; and in a few weeks he became, in reality, the accepted lover of Miss Emma Sparrow.

But there was one thing very strange in the progress of his courtship. On his first acquaintance, the lady had perfectly snubbed him; in fact, she was barely civil, to the terrible discomfiture of her manœuvring mamma; but, after a short time, and all of a sudden, she became altogether as polite: this change Mr. Skuffle attributed to her gradual perception of his nascent good qualities bursting into existence, in which idea her mother joined; congratulating herself, at last, how snugly and comfortably the whole affair had been conducted, and what a blessing it was, that it would now be all over between her daughter and Tom Bankes—the rantipole, sporting, house-forbidden relative, before alluded to. Now that all her anxieties on that score were removed, and her daughter had actually fixed the wedding-day, the good lady walked out with the air of a mother who had done her duty; noticing, in the most patronizing style, those ladies she chanced to meet in the village, whose plans upon Mr. Skuffle had failed, and whose daughters were still single.

As soon as the day of days was determined upon, all

was bustle and confusion at Mr. Sparrow's. Every young woman in the village, capable of holding a needle, was engaged to work for the family during three weeks, coming every morning and departing every evening; both the mantuamakers were overdone with orders; and such a Rag-fair of shreds and patches as the whole house presented was never seen. All sorts of fashion-books were procured from the librarian's, at the county town, distant some six miles, filled with pictures of elegant ladies, four in a row, holding parasols, bouquets, fans, and leaning against harps, possessing such feet, waists, and little round under-lips as are met with only in works of that kind: and over them, on the same page, were scores of head-dresses and bonnets, with patterns for habit-shirts, chemisettes, pelerines, and all the rest of that tribe of articles, which tortured collars, with tails and wings, are forced to assume. Then, the linendraper was running in and out of the house all day long, with a yard measure and a paper parcel each time; and taking back the accounts of the bride's dress to the people who were waiting for grocery at his other counter, which he served in such a hurried manner as fully to account for the small lumps of butter on the book-muslins, lard on the lace, and tallow on the *tulle*, dabs of which were constantly adhering. Old Mr. Sparrow, who took the least interest of all the family in the proceedings, was almost worried out of his life with proposals, and queries, and suggestions; so that, at last, he was compelled to betake himself to the cart-shed, in order to enjoy his pipe, first taking the precaution to turn a bull loose in the straw-yard, to prevent people from crossing it, and thus secure himself from all intrusion.

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It was the night before the bridal, and the time was about half-past eleven. The lights in the long one-storied cluster of buildings that constituted Mr. Sparrow's farm, were gradually disappearing, one by one, as the inmates of the chambers, from whose windows their rays proceeded, were successively retiring to rest. All was hushed in the still deep silence of the country, broken only by the distant bay of the sheep-dog, or the occasional stamp of horses in the stable, as Tom Bankes, armed with a piece of raw meat and a cudgel, noiselessly opened the farm-gate, and crossed the yard towards the house, keeping as closely as possible in the shade of the buildings. But the old house-dog was wide-awake, if everybody else slumbered; and, starting from the old tub, which formed his house, began a loud bark as he recognised Tom's figure approaching in the indistinct light. "Lay down Wolf," said Tom, as he boldly advanced towards him. "There, there—good dog: soh! old boy, don't you know me?" and, stooping down, he patted the dog's sides, and gave him the piece of meat, which quieted the animal in an instant. It was well he did, for Mr. Sparrow heard the alarm, and, opening the casement of his chamber, protruded his head, enveloped in one of those dreadfully unromantic conical cotton nightcaps, with the idea of which we always associate a farce, or an 'execution.

"Who's there?" cried the farmer. No one, of course answered; and Tom crouched down behind the dog-kennel, which was, unluckily, in the full gleam of the moonlight, until Mr. Sparrow, satisfied no thieves were approaching, drew back his head.

As soon as all was again quiet, he crept across the lawn, and, gently dragging an iron roller over the grass,

which came quite close to the house, with the exception of a narrow flower-bed, rested its handle against the wall; and then, standing on its body, was enabled to tap lightly against the window, on a level with his head, from whence a light in the interior was plainly visible, although the blind was down, and a curtain carefully drawn across. The summons was heard, and the next moment Emma Sparrow's fair hand opened the little diamond-paned casement.

Now, it is very likely the fairer portion of our readers (if we are so honoured—and we trust we are) would like very much to know what the conversation was that ensued between Tom Bankes and the young lady. If this be the case, we are sorry to disappoint them; but we are not going to reveal it. Firstly, it would be a great breach of confidence and honourable secrecy on our part; and, secondly, the conversation between a gentleman of five-and-twenty and a pretty girl of eighteen, must be of that particularly edifying nature, especially by moonlight and alone, that we could not do fair justice to it upon paper. Their dialogue, however, lasted a very long time—quite long enough to have given them both very bad colds in the head; and, frequently, Emma pointed to a light, visible through the trees, in the distance, which proved that Mr. Skuffle still continued to watch by the midnight oil—no, the midnight metallic wick, that burnt before him; and then they both laughed, until Emma intimated to Tom the vicinity of her father's bed-room, and so subdued the merriment. Strange conduct this was for a young lady the night before her marriage, and with another person, too; but this was not all. When Tom took his leave, he shook hands a great many times; and, at last, raising himself up with both

hands, like the little Mr. Pickwicks in the sand toys, before they tumble over the pole, elevated his head above the sill of the window, and brought his face so close to Emma's that their lips ——; but what else on earth could Tom do under such circumstances? At this period, however, the roller, not being secured against the wall, rolled away, and the iron handle rattled down the flints that faced the front of the house. The next moment the dog, freshly awaked, began to bark; Tom jumped over the palings; Emma rapidly shut the window, and extinguished her candle; and Mr. Sparrow once more projected his nightcap at his casement; all which performances were as simultaneous as if the actors had been a set of puppets, put in motion by the pulling of one string.

“What a stupid ass I have been!” muttered Tom to himself, as he gained the road; “after having been here every night for nearly a month, to finish with an uproar at last.”

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The eventful morning arrived; and great was the excitement amongst the usually quiet inhabitants of Chorturmut. To quote the words of our respected contemporaries, the weekly provincial press, “the day was ushered in by the bells ringing a merry peal,” a process, in the present case, somewhat difficult of execution, as the belfry of the church possessed but two; but, by the ingenuity of the ringer, an old woman who made leather sit-upons, and sold nuts and hardbake in the High-street, a most hilarious peal was produced; the said old woman first pulling one rope, then the other, and then both together, by way of variety. At the Talbot Inn, which, not being within ten miles of the railroad, boasted four post-horses, stood

a new carriage, which the boots informed the admiring bystanders "had come from Lunnun a purpose of the bride;" and the ostler and potboy were rubbing down the said quartette of quadrupeds at the door of the stables. The chambermaid was standing at the window of the bar, pinning white bows on the postboy's hats; and a jolly man, in a green coat, was sitting in a spring-cart at the door, waiting for his morning glass of ale.

"Here's my love to you, Mary," said he, winking his eye to the girl, as the waiter brought him his order; "and much good it may do you. Is them bows for our wedding?"

"I never see such a wedding," said Mary coquettishly.

"Then we arn't to be married this morning, my dear," replied the jolly man. "You're a monsus pretty girl, you are, too."

"Ah, that 's as you say," said Mary; turning the hat round, to see if the bow was pinned even.

"Capitally done," continued the jolly man. "You ought to have a husband, if it was only to pin bows on his hat. Never mind, sweetheart; you shall put a cockade on a little cap some day;" and then he paid for his ale and drove on, telling Mary he would call for her on his way to church the next morning.

Around the churchyard the usual country nuptial crowd of women, old men, and children, had collected, who were basking in the sun on the tombstones, or play-amongst them; occasionally asking the sexton, with the most humble deference for his red plush breeches, when he thought the wedding party would arrive. Two or three of the charity children were indulging in occasional cheers in front of Mr. Skuffle's house, whenever they caught sight of him, as he passed the staircase windows;

and Miss Pinkey, and the old lady she boarded with, had been sitting up, in great form and fine caps, all the morning, at the first floor window, to watch the proceedings. All Mr. Sparrow's labourers were having breakfast in the barn, off cold meat and ale—a diet which suited their complaint admirably; in fact, all was gossip and festivity. When, at last, the one-horse fly of the village livery-man drew up at Mr. Sparrow's door, a great rush took place towards it, as if the occasion of its being hired had endowed it with some new and imposing attraction; but when the carriage with four real horses (it was a four-wheeled chaise, meant for two, or one, with shafts,) drew up in front of the Talbot, and then went up to the church, and then came back again, the excitement of the mob knew no bounds; and, in their overflowing hilarity, they successively cheered the sexton, the ostler, the pew-opener, the beadle, and all Mr. Sparrow's servants, until there was no one left to cheer but the workhouse idiot, who came with a large white paper bow in his cap, surmounted by a cock's feather, to join the throng.

The fly proceeded to Mr. Skuffle's; and then the four post-horses drew the phaeton up to Mr. Sparrow's door; which was again minutely inspected by the mob, who, amongst other things, wondered why the strange postilion on the leader wore such large whiskers and green spectacles—an anomaly unknown in postboys. At half-past nine, the door of Mr. Sparrow's house opened, and the bride and her sisters appeared. The boots of the Talbot, who officiated as footman, opened the door of the hinder seat, and, amidst the admiration of all, Emma ascended. The two postilions, who had been looking back, with their hands on their horses' haunches, at the same moment spurred the animals onward; and, with the steps still

down, the door open, and nobody but the fair bride under the head of the back seat, the carriage moved from the door. The horses broke into a gallop, and in less time than we can relate it, the whole concern whirled rapidly across the common, amidst the utter astonishment of the people, the screams of Mrs. Sparrow and the two plain daughters, and the speechless and staggering wonder of Mr. Skuffle, who was at that moment about to enter the fly.

On, on went the equipage, over the common, across the turnpike road, and along the green lanes and byways, at increasing speed, until the level embankment of the Great Western Railroad appeared before them, and the white walls of one of its stations gleamed in the morning sun. Far in the distance, to the left, an up-train was seen approaching, leaving its long tail of steam to mark its progress. Fresh whip and spur were applied—two more miles were cleared—the station was reached, and the postilion on the leader, pitching his whiskers and spectacles into the carriage, pulled out the lady and his cutaway coat, which was stuffed under the seat, at the same time. In two minutes more the bell had rung, and Tom Bankes and Emma were in a first-class carriage, flying along the road to the West Drayton station, where their banns had been published the three Sundays previous. In another half-hour they were married.

We would fain draw a veil over the scene of domestic agony that occurred at Chorturmut. The only person that appeared capable of consolation was Mr. Sparrow himself, who, when he learned from the grinning boots that Mr. Bankes had been at the bottom of it all, almost smiled. The young scapegrace had always been a lurking favourite of his: it was the mamma-bird that had so

decidedly objected to him. Mrs. Sparrow went into screaming hysterics for four hours; and the two plain daughters would have done the same, but as they were obliged to attend to their mother, they reluctantly gave up the idea. As for Pimony, he was raving; at least we heard so, from his old housekeeper. He three times ran down to the well, in order to drown himself; and three times did that good woman prevent him, by pulling him in-doors again by the tails of the new blue coat with conservative buttons, which he had published for the wedding: and even then she was obliged to remove the water-jug from his bed-room, because he kept insanely endeavouring, in the most frantic manner, to put his head into it.

Three weeks after that, Mr. Skuffle's effects were sold by public auction. The sale lasted four hours, beginning with the fender and wash-hand-stand in the front attic, and ending with the one nine-gallon cask, pitchfork, ash-sieve, bird-cage, and tinder-box, in the outhouse. Five blank lots of sundries were also added, consisting of all the lie-about rubbish that had collected in the auctioneer's show rooms for the last twelve months. Miss Pinkey, and the old lady she boarded with, attended all the time, marking every lot in the catalogue very carefully, and thinking the blue-and-white dinner service went very dear. There was the usual complement of low jokes and lower bidders; the usual beggarly prying curiosity attendant upon sales; the usual gang of Jews and brokers; and the usual tattle of Mr. Skuffle's reasons for quitting Chorturmut.

He is still in single blessedness, and never intends to marry; after, as he says, "the deceit of her whom he had so fondly loved and lost." His pride was hurt at being so thoroughly *sold* by a young country farmer, and it was

long before he recovered. But, when he talked the matter over calmly with his friends—when he reflected that he was not the first, nor the hundredth, nor the hundred-thousandth man who had been jilted by one of the fair sex, whose affection, the poets tell us, is so burning, deep, unchanging, and eternal—when he saw the truth of this he was somewhat consoled; but, at the same time, vowed never to be engaged again, unless merely “for the next quadrille.”

Tom Bankes and his pretty wife are very happy. They are reconciled to the old people; and as one sister's marriage often opens the best road for the others to go off upon, where there are a lot of single girls all in the same family, they are, we believe, about to change their names. Tom has given up all his wild freaks, with the exception of his two pointers, and often amuses his friends with the story of jockeying the cockney, and so boldly carrying away and wedding the intended bride of Mr. Pimony Skuffle.

HINTS TO THE NEWSPAPERS.

It has always appeared to us, that there must be a great waste of time amongst the compositors of the newspaper offices—that industrious, knowledge-spreading class, who consume the greater part of the night in the not very exciting employment of twitching little oblong bits of metal out of square compartments, to form certain words and paragraphs, with a quickness only equalled, both in appearance and rapidity, by a pigeon pecking up peas; whilst everybody else, who is to benefit by their labours on the morrow, is comfortably asleep in bed, (or at least ought to be,) perfectly uncon-

scious of the preparation going on for the next journal; unless, indeed, they reside where a steam-engine keeps up the most pleasing accompaniment to their waking reveries, in a noise varying between a rattle and a bang, with the most determined and unflinching perseverance.

And how ungrateful, after all this turmoil, is the majority of the readers! After looking over eight-and-forty columns of varied information, each nearly two feet long by two inches and three quarters broad, none of which has appeared in print before—after reading the despatches from all parts of the world, without reflecting upon the miles that the copy has travelled, the changes from lumbering *malle-postes* to rickety steamers, the hazardous and rapid journey over bad roads, dangerous passes, and various alternations of heat, snow, desert, and inundation, that the couriers have come through—these novelty-thirsting wonder-seekers tell their friends “there is nothing in the paper.”

Now, we have thought upon a plan to abridge, in some measure, the labours of the compositor; and we call upon the typefounders generally for their strenuous co-operation to work out our scheme. The Chinese have no alphabet—at least, we believe not; but they have two or three millions of queer characters, no doubt very easily learnt by those who have a twist that way, fashioned like a conglomeration of dislocated Hebrew, each of which we are told signifies certain objects or sentences, which must undoubtedly save much time in putting together (“setting up” we believe to be more technical) the readable portion of a book. We have carefully noted down, in commencing, a few sentences which we have an idea might be executed in the same style by a stereotyping process, or any other that might be thought most

convenient by the founder. We only throw these out as hints, and leave it to the trade to improve upon them. Perfection cannot be expected at once in any line, but must be reached by degrees. The Marquis of Worcester when he cooked his own dinner in the dungeons of the Tower, and found out the power of steam in blowing off the tight lid of the ill-made stew-pan with which the gaoler of the time had furnished him, little thought that this discovered property of hot water would gradually improve, until larger stew-pans, on an elaborate and complicated plan, would send people to all parts of the world—sometimes even clean out of it—in less time than the imprisoned nobleman could eat the meal he had been so philosophically preparing. Everything is progressive—electro-magnetism, quarter-day, the moon, glaciers, intoxication, rust, and hard table-beer; and we trust that the plan, of which we now present the world with a mere outline, may lay the foundation of a new era in the printing of newspapers. These, then, are at present a few of our principal sentences, which we think might with advantage be all cast in one piece, from the frequent use made of them by the distributors of news and politics.

CLASS 1.—*General Information.*

Under this head we include the larger and most important portion of the paper. Even whole leading articles might be kept ready made-up, and used again after a certain lapse of time; for if anybody will take the trouble to look at the journals of fifty years back, he will find that the editor's ideas were precisely similar to those of the present day. Approaching ruin of the country; distress of the labouring classes; the instability of the

ministry, and their sure defeat in a short period; certain gain which will accrue to their own (the newspaper's) party by a dissolution and fresh election; ingenious turning of a palpable minority into a glorious victory; with vituperation, flattery, rumours of bad and good, laments and exultation,—are profusely scattered through the article. The usual information we would have cast in solid pieces, as follows:—

Had there been the least wind, the whole of the street would have fallen a prey to the devouring element.

From inquiries made by our reporter yesterday relative to the property destroyed, it would appear that the amount of the loss had been much exaggerated.

The jury proceeded to view the bodies, which presented a horrid spectacle, being literally burnt to a cinder.

The children marched round the room after dinner, and their clean healthy appearance was the subject of general commendation.

We have received the French papers of Tuesday, but they contain little additional interest. The following appeared in part of our edition of yesterday.

She was immediately taken to the Middlesex Hospital, where the injury was pronounced to be of a dangerous nature.

(The words, *cab*, *crossing*, *elderly woman*, *concussion*, and *Oxford Street*, may each be advantageously cast in one piece for this paragraph.)

CLASS 2.—*Advertisements.*

This part of the journal, of course, admits of infinite changes: but the following pieces may be found useful:—

This ship presents a splendid opportunity for passengers, and carries an experienced surgeon. For freight or

passage, apply to the commander on board, or at the Jerusalem Coffee-house.

H. M. is implored to return immediately, or write to his family. He may rest assured that everything will be arranged to his satisfaction.

Douceur,—500*l.* will be given to any person who can present the advertiser with a permanent situation, which will yield an income of not less than 500*l.* a-year. The strictest honour and secrecy may be relied on.

A widow lady is anxious for an engagement to superintend the household of a single gentleman, or a widower without children.

To the Heads of Ladies' Schools.—The friends of a young lady are desirous of placing her in a first-rate establishment, where the devotion of one part of her time to the pupils would be considered equivalent to receiving lessons in French, German, Italian, and music, during the other.

CLASS 3.—*Answers to Correspondents.*

(More especially addressed to the Sunday Papers.)

Madame Vestris is not yet forty-six.

St. Paul's is higher than the Monument.

A. bets B. that it is nearer twelve than one. On referring to the clock, it is ten minutes to one. Which wins? A. is an ass.

We do not recollect Mr. Keeley's performance of *Hamlet*. Mr. Macready never played the *Bottle Imp*.

Prince Albert is not an Englishman.

We really cannot tell who is my Lord Melbourne's brewer. We advise A. to inquire at his Lordship's residence.

C. D. Yes.

Boulogne is in France.

The pit of Covent-garden is bigger than that of Drury-lane.

The statement of B. "that the only good resulting from steeple-chases is, that they sometimes get rid of a fool," is both false and unsportsmanlike. He is not, however, actionable for saying so, nor is it a proof of his insanity.

We really cannot tell how many people pass through the southern arch of Temple Bar during the day. We advise "A Constant Reader" to post himself there and count them. He can refresh himself with baked apples from the stall at the edge of the pavement.

Musicus.—You win. There is an instrument fashioned and painted like a serpent in the musician's at the corner of Craig's-court, Charing Cross.

Mr. Dickens did not write *Jack Sheppard*. It is the production of Mr. Ainsworth, who is not the author of the Latin Dictionary bearing his name.

We are not aware how it occurs that false fronts and yellow turbans are so prevalent in a boarding-house at a guinea and a half a-week. We do not think it fair to dub such a house "The Old Curiosity Shop."

A VISIT TO GREENWICH FAIR.

ON Tuesday evening, March 29, 1842, Messrs. Mills, Barlow, and Saunders, three "medical young gentlemen," who, although they have passed their examinations, bear in mind the advice of a celebrated teacher, and "do not cease to consider themselves as students," or behave accordingly, honoured Greenwich fair with their presence.

The appointed trysting-place, previously to starting for the festive scene, was the Cheshire Cheese, in Wine-office Court, Fleet Street; an establishment which, in the scale of architectural creation, forms the link between the coffee-room and the menagerie, possessing the viands and waiters of the one, and the sawdust and feeding-time of the other. Having ordered various "muttons to follow," which, in the *patois* of this part of the world, is understood to mean consecutive chops, Mr. Barlow confidentially informed his friends that the punch brewed at this house was rather extensive; whereupon divers tumblers were perpetrated; and, overcome either by the seductive beverage, or the bright eyes of the young lady who manufactured it, the three gentlemen indulged in divers facetious pastimes, to the great amusement of the rest of the company; finally, with the assistance of a burnt cork, converting the end of one of the boxes into the following singularly felicitous design:—



At half-past eight P.M. the party left Wine-office Court in a state of exceeding hilarity ; and, observing a cab standing opposite the Bolt-in-Tun, stepped into it forthwith, but on finding that it was waiting for a passenger, immediately stepped out again. Another like vehicle, however, coming by, they lost no time in engaging it, and, making a bargain for eighteenpence, told the driver to go in a similar manner to bricks, to the Surrey side of London Bridge. On their journey thither they indulged in various shouts, yells, and whistles, Mr. Mills, in particular, thrusting his head and shoulders out of the window, facetiously exclaiming to the passengers, "Here we are again! How are you?" after the manner of the celebrated Mr. T. Matthews. Mr. Barlow contented himself by sitting very back, and chaunting a *mélange* from Norma, interspersed with airs from the Cyder Cellars ; and Mr. Saunders amputated the tassel of one of the glasses, throwing it into the open window of the first omnibus that passed, which, in all probability, conveyed it to Brentford End.

They arrived at the terminus of the Greenwich Railway just in time to take their seats in one of the rattling boxes denominated by courtesy, second-class carriages, which, upon payment of sixpence each, they were permitted to enter. In two minutes the train moved on, and they were much edified by the continuous brick-fields and gas-manufactories, whose localities they invaded, pronouncing the rapid dioramas of sectional habitations and domestic interiors which met their view, exceedingly interesting. The engine became a locomotive Asmodeus, hurrying them from roof to roof in quick succession, placing them on terms of close intimacy with the garret-

windows, revealing endless bird's-eye views of chimney-pots, back yards, and water-butts, and causing the passengers of reflective minds to meditate upon the accumulation of poverty and pig-sties that exist in the metropolis, unknown to the inhabitants in general, and West-enders in particular.

The progress of the train was not so rapid as might have been expected; this Mr. Barlow attributed to the use of the simple fluid in the boiler instead of gin-and-water, which, he informed a lady near him, was always laid on at fair-time. At Deptford Creek the engine stopped altogether, and remained stationary for at least ten minutes. Messrs. Mills and Saunders, having in vain attempted, by shouting and screaming, to arouse the stoker to a sense of his duty, commenced the inspiring national air of "Rule Britannia," or rather the words newly arranged, at the very top of their voices, in which they were joined by the whole strength of the rest of the passengers. By these means the popular indignation was audibly expressed, and the train at length moved on, arriving at the terminus at half-past nine.

Hrving fixed upon a stellated arrangement of variegated lights to serve as a species of pole-star, in case they should be separated by the crowd, our three companions plunged, like so many Miltons, into the midst of things. Around them was a dense mass of human beings; on either side a row of richly-furnished booths, groaning with toys and gingerbread; above them lights innumerable; beneath them, an expanse of mud and rough granite; before them, the imposing exterior of the shows; and behind them the things they had passed. The remote thunder of trumpets and drums, mingled with the nearer

harmony of Æolian pears, and the cries, laughter, and chidings of the festive throng smote, with deafening confusion on the ears.

Their first step was to halt at one of the stalls, where each purchased a small penny cornet without the pistons, and a curious little instrument, which it appears actually incumbent upon everybody to possess who wishes to take up an important position at Greenwich Fair. This diverting and ingenious piece of mechanism is principally formed by a stellated disc of wood, one inch in diameter by three-eighths in thickness. A small spring of wood is attached to the frame-work by a metal pin called a tack, and as the wheel is turned by friction against any extraneous body the spring falls from one vandyke to another, producing, by the rapid succession of atmospheric concussions, a noise resembling the laceration of a garment. Thus armed, they proceeded onwards, promoting, by their musical instruments, the harmony of the delightful scene ; and, after much jostling, and bandying of various uncomplimentary expressions with the crowd, arrived in front of the principal show, which merits especial notice.

The precise date of the erection of Richardson's (or more properly, Lee and Johnson's) theatre has not been correctly ascertained ; but it is presumed that the first pole was pitched on the Friday night previous to the fair. It is an elegant structure of baize and canvass, brilliantly illuminated by variegated lamps and pipkins of fat, and enriched, in addition, by red serge draperies, embroidered with brass ornaments, fashioned similarly to those which cover the screws of four-post bedsteads. The performances of this theatre are strictly illegitimate, yet bear a close analogy to the " moralities " of olden time, inasmuch

as the best part takes place outside of the platform of the cart; or approaching, perhaps, nearer to the “mysteries” of the middle ages, from the perfect unintelligibility of the plots, which would defy the united efforts of Mr. Payne Collier, and the whole of the Shakespeare Society, to render them comprehensible.

On ascending the platform, the three young gentlemen stopped to gaze at an intricate dance performed by the whole of the company, which they accompanied on their trumpets. At its conclusion, Mr. Mills asked the clown “how he felt upon the whole?” and the clown replied by wishing to know what Mr. Mills was going to stand. On paying sixpence, they were admitted to the gallery; but the accommodation of this part of the house not being to their satisfaction, they at once climbed over the barrier into the boxes, divers others of the gentlemen present following their example.

The first play occupied exactly ten minutes. It contained one ghost, two murders, and three combats, and represented Innocence, though for a time oppressed, ultimately triumphant over Guilt; a consummation which, Mr. Barlow observed, must be highly gratifying to every well-regulated mind. The proportion of the actors to the height of the stage was exceedingly fine; so was their delivery; only equalled by the interpolations of the audience, which may be described as follows:—

SCENE—*The Hall of Judgment.*

Tyrant Lord.—Now, mitheruble athathin, what have you to thay for yourthelf?

Mr. Barlow (in the style of Herr Von Joel.)—*Va-ri-e-ty!*

Oppressed Peasant.—That I am innocent as the mountain snow.

Gentleman in the gallery.—Oh! Walker!

Second Gentleman.—Order!



(*Obligato of trumpets and musical fruit by the audience.*)

Tyrant Lord.—You are guilty. Thummonth the headthman.

Popular indignation of spectators.—Shame! shame! Police!—Never mind, little un—at him agin!

Tyrant Lord.—Away!—hith life ith forfeit.

Wag in the pit.—What'll you take for your boots barring the heels ?

And so on to the fall of the curtain.

A comic song served as an overture to the pantomime, which was an abridgment of "Riddle-me-riddle-me-ree," lately performed at the Olympic Theatre. The jokes therein were two in number. One consisted in the sudden abstraction, by invisible agency, of a wickerwork plum-pudding from the hands of the Clown, who, thereupon, entitled it a hasty-pudding; the other, which was simply practical, in the Clown's stealing a string of sausages, manufactured from painted canvas stuffed with sawdust, and then dashing them into the Pantaloon's face. The last scene was an adjournment to "Fairy Land," that locality being represented by the interior of a large summer-house, with the assembling of the company, and the additional presence of two young ladies in pink calico tunics, who had previously retailed peppermint and apples to the company. At the conclusion, the audience were thanked in the name of the proprietors, and then let out at a side-door, a fresh rush immediately filling the theatre.

Messrs. Saunders, Barlow, and Mills next proceeded to view the equestrianism at the "Royal Circus." The chandelier which lighted the interior was ingeniously formed of concentric iron hoops one over the other, supporting several very adipose candles, which the Merryman occasionally snuffed with his fingers in a humorous and diverting manner. The exhibition commenced with the display of the Terpsichorean powers of a young lady on the tight rope, which stretched across the arena—a ring of sawdust, ornamented with orange-peel. She was

ten years of age, and splendidly dressed in a coloured calico frock, with a faded cotton-velvet body, ornamented with lines of dull spangles and tarnished silver lace, with whitey-brown holland slippers. After this, they were gratified by the “grand *entrée* of the stud,”—a piebald mare, inclined to corpulency, led in by two grooms in



fustian waistcoats and ankle-jacks. The young lady now danced upon horseback, assuming a graceful attitude and pleasing *stereotypical* smile. Before this act concluded, Mr. Saunders and his friends departed, perfectly satisfied with what they had seen, and also with what they had not, but which they could very well imagine. Here also the Clown's jokes were of the dual number. After having chalked the slippers of the young lady, he proceeded to do the same to his own nose, and, subsequently, to the soles of his shoes, “because he had slipped into a public house the night before, and into the gutter afterwards, and did not wish to do it again.” Also, when

assaulted by the Mr. Widdicomb of the ring, he hauled that person in front of the piebald steed, and then professed himself quite satisfied, having brought him before the *mare*. (The reader is here humbly solicited to laugh, merely as a personal favour.) The impression left on the minds of the young gentlemen upon leaving was, that they had enjoyed a very rational—at any rate a very reasonable—entertainment. The price of admission, as stated outside, was sixpence to the boxes, and threepence to the gallery; but these distinctions proved, upon going inside, perfectly apocryphal.

The observing trio then proceeded to the next show, to view the fat pig, with other wonders, therein to be seen by all who could command one penny. They discovered the monster reclining on a bed of straw, and grunting piteously under his too, too solid fat. When the showman had violently thrust twenty people into a space capable of accommodating four or five, the keeper delivered the following lecture upon the pig, and the other two curiosities which composed the exhibition. It should be stated that the man appeared to be suffering from influenza.

“Geltelbel ald ladies,

“The hadibal that you there be-old beasures tel feet three·ilches frob the slout to the tail. The daily quality of food which he colsubes is wul peck of potatoes, ald wul shillil’s wuth of bread. I shall low bake hib get up, ald you will thel have al opportunity hof seeil’ hib to advaltage.”

So saying, he stirred the monster up with a switch, to his no small annoyance. The brute, after standing in the worst possible of humours for about two minutes, began to incline itself on its right side, until, at length,

having forced its bulk over the centre of gravity, it fell at full length, with a weight that threatened to bring the whole machine down.

"The hadibal," continued the keeper, "that you see suspended there, is a calf, borl with two eds ald two tails. That other curiosity, ladies ald geltelbel, is called the porcupile fish, from beil' covered, has you observe, all over with prickles; ald was vashed ashore ob the coast ov Buckilghabshire. Geltelbel ald ladies, a trifle, hif you please, for the showbal."

Emerging from the den of this extraordinary lion (*videlicet*, pig), our three adventurers, forcing their way through a crowd of living obstacles, to the provocation of remonstrances more warm than affectionate, and of salutations less polite than playful, bore—or, rather bored,—in the direction of another menagerie, of which the embellished exterior attracted their attention. The principal curiosities which the exhibition contained, appeared from the pictorial advertisement outside, to be not very dissimilar to those they had just witnessed,—one of them being, literally, a member of the *sus scrofa* family, and the other an animal in many respects closely allied to it, but, from being a biped, and having some pretensions to the feminine cast of countenance, denominated "The fat girl."

A whole-length portrait, that graced the front of the exhibition, represented the young lady as she was supposed to appear inside. The drapery of the figure was somewhat scanty, and free from the slightest affectation of harmony in the arrangement of the colours. It was evident that the artist had sacrificed grace to effect; his object having been to afford as full a display of the unadorned beauties of the neck, arms, and ankles, as he

possibly could. On the right of the corpulent fair-one (the picture was a full front) stood, arrayed in the costume of the commencement of the present century, a lady, in a short-waisted dress, with a red parasol: on the left, a gentleman in a blue coat, brass buttons, leather breeches, and top-boots; both personages in profile, and exhibiting animated gestures of astonishment. This



chef d'œuvre of anonymous art was flanked by two other productions, apparently by the same hand; one being a delineation of "Gorgons, Hydras, and Chimeras dire," with other serpentine monstrosities; and the other, the interesting and learned pig, in a mystic circle of cards, letters, and points of the compass.

The students having, by the sacrifice of a small piece

of money, obtained admission in the *penetralia* of the caravan, found themselves in the presence of two or three small boys, and the sagacious animal himself; who with the instinct peculiar to his species, was hunting for eatables all about the place, and testifying by various grunts, his dissatisfaction at not finding any. At the further end of this cabinet of curiosities, which in length might be equalled by an ordinary man's jump, and in breadth by, perhaps three skips of a flea of average power, was a species of *sanctum*, apparently formed of bed-furniture and fringe, and adapted, as it were, for the residence of some zoological curiosity. Presently a hand appeared, which drew the two portions together, and then the concussion, as of a heavy body relapsing into a state of quiescence, left no doubt on the minds of the spectators that the inmate of this seclusion was the fat girl. In a few minutes the show having filled to a degree that rendered it necessary to open a small trap-door in the roof, the exhibition commenced.

"Fust, gen'l'men and ladies," said the demonstrator, in that peculiar tone which frequent catarrhal diseases, and the constant use of alcoholic remedies, combine to produce,—“fust, we shall hintroduce to yer notice that wonderful nacheral curiosity of the female speechis, the fat girl. For yer satisfacshun she'll walk athert the caravan, and back agin, so as you may see there's no himposition in the case.”

Herewith, the fair phenomenon, parting the curtain to the right and left, emerged from her bower, and walked twice up and down the middle of the show, endeavouring as she went to shake the frail tenement with her tread. The truth was, that the affair slightly approached to what Mr. Saunders denominated “a take

in,"—Mr. Mills, "his eye," and Mr. Barlow, "a jolly sell;" all of them agreeing that they had seen several nurses who were twice as fat; but, that a certain young lady, not half her age—the fat *girl* was, at least, fifty,—daily on view in a particular tobacco-shop, was, certainly, twice her size. They allowed that the plume of white feathers in her hair, the *bandeau* on her forehead, the spangled dress, and the short sleeves and petticoats, had been correctly delineated outside the show; but that the portrait of the fat girl, on the whole, and particularly as regarded expression, was "a decided case" of flattery.

The female having retired, the other animal became the observed of all observers. He performed three feats, each requiring (for a pig) an amazing exertion of intellect. He was first desired by his master to declare which among the male individuals present might be a



that moment in love, by stopping opposite to him in his circuit. Mr. Saunders denominated this performance "a jib," as he stopped before a little boy of six years' old, who was munching an apple, which had probably attracted him. A kick in the stomach, administered by his master, recalled him to a sense of his obligations, and he straightway pitched upon Mr. Barlow, at which three young ladies in the show laughed amazingly. His next task was to point out the young woman present whom the tender passion deprived of rest at night, and caused, by the febrile excitement which it induced, to kick off the superincumbent drapery. This he achieved so well as to excite universal applause; and, as the damsel indicated was about twenty, it is probable, on statistical grounds, that he was right. And, lastly, he was desired to tell who was the greatest rogue in the company; and decided in favour of his master—a conclusion which nobody doubted.

After the hierophant of the caravan had exhibited some snakes, he thanked the audience; and the illustrious triad bent their steps towards the point, *par excellence*, of attraction—the Crown and Anchor Booth. To render the company of this establishment slightly exclusive and select, the sum of one shilling was demanded for entrance. Messrs. Saunders and Barlow, by means of recommendations, in the shape of return tickets, which they obtained from two of its lady-patronesses, who were taking their leave for the evening, effected their entrance without paying; as, also, did Mr. Mills, who stooped down, and butted, head first, through the crowd at the wicket.

In order to adequately describe the scene presented by the interior of this splendid booth, or the feelings

which it excited, no pen less gifted than that of the talented auctioneer, who can raise even rubbish to rarities, could aspire. All was music, light, and tobacco; and the crowd, but for the hilarity which pervaded it, would have been awful. Stars, festoons, balloons, V's and A's, crowns, and other fanciful arrangement of variegated lamps, depended from the ceiling, producing a singular empyreumatic odour,—strong, certainly, yet to those who liked it, pleasant. On a raised and curiously-unsafe platform were seated some musicians of untiring energy; and several hundred couples were performing the Spanish dance below. The dancers were mostly of the opposite sexes; but, amongst them were several individuals of that class of society so well known as “gents,” who, out of sheer devotion to Bacchus and Terpsichore, were exhibiting the poetry of motion in partnership. Two of these “gents,” impinging somewhat violently against Mr. Saunders, he was about to perform an operation on them, which Dr. Conquest has tried for water on the brain, *viz.* “punching the head,” and was only deterred by the thought that black eyes look rakish at *demonstration* in the morning.

Our friends, now making the circuit of this scene of innocent festivity, joined a procession of bacchanals, male and female, headed by a Comus in cloth boots and a fifteen-shilling Taglioni, and parading, after the manner of the ancients, to the sound of musical instruments—trumpets, whistles, horns, and drums. As the procession generally chose for its line the centre of the Spanish dance whilst it was in full play, many serious concussions took place; so, fearing an *émeute*, the trio left the jovial band, and wandered awhile “at their own sweet will,” among the crowd, interchanging greetings with some

whom they knew, and with a great many more whom they not. At last, pronouncing the atmosphere too full of carbonic acid for wholesome respiration ; or, as Mr. Barlow said, "so full of smoke that he should cut it ;" and somewhat inclining to the celebrated "hospital Medoc," commonly known as "half-and-half," they determined to leave the booth. But, not exactly approving of the exclusive principle on which the arrangements were conducted, they took checks, and gave them to the most disreputable persons they could find.

As they returned into town they observed an erection, which reminded them of the pictures of Noah's ark. It was nearly sixty feet long, and contained, they were informed, a live whale. Agreeing that whatever was to be seen there was, no doubt, very like one, they proceeded, without entering, on their way ; and happening to see some shrimps invitingly displayed in a window, amongst other luxuries, they rushed upstairs, guided by a board in the shop, on which was inscribed "Supper Rooms," and entered the first-floor front. They were rather dismayed at finding they had entered a temperance coffee-house, where nothing was kept but coffee and ginger-beer ; but, having prevailed upon the landlady to send out for two pots of the favorite beverage, they ordered some of the aforesaid *crustacea*, and commenced a bacchanalian song, in which Mr. Barlow accused himself of having forsaken an imaginary young lady, named Phillis, to whom he was supposed to be paying his addresses, and stuck to his glass ; ending with an enumeration of the comforts found in wine.

When this had concluded, to the great joy of the assembled teetotallers, Mr. Mills got out of the window upon the ledge of the shop-front, and amused himself by

addressing the crowd on the subject of the income-tax, strangely mixing it up with divers snatches of anatomy and popular metaphysics. His harangue was received with loud shouts, and showers of orange-peel ; but fearing lest two or three policemen should be added to the number of his hearers, and finding that the shrimps and half-and-half had arrived, after a few minutes' oratory, the honourable gentleman sat down—to supper.

The social meal having been despatched, our three adventurers returned to town. They went back as they came—by the train ; and yelled, shouted, and screamed, with all their might, to the apparent delight of the generality of their fellow passengers ; but to the scandalization of a small minority, in the person of a serious-looking young man, who inquired whether they considered themselves gentlemen ; to which question they replied, that they certainly did not,—thus stopping all further argument.

We will not follow their revelries further. It will suffice to say that, on returning to their respective lodgings—at what precise time is not known, but it is presumed to have been at a very early hour,—each, as he laid his head upon his pillow, exulted in that delightful consciousness, which it is the exclusive privilege of the aspiring mind to feel, of having “done it rather.”



A NIGHT IN THE ROYAL GEORGE.

A CONFESSION OF THE DEEP.

THE circumstances I am about to relate will do little to raise me in the opinion of the reader, into whose hands these papers may happen to fall. Awful and harrowing

as were the events of that dreadful night, I can lay but small claim to mental boldness, in having met them as I did. Avarice—sordid, calculating avarice—drove me to the attempt, and I well deserved the total miscarriage of all my plans that succeeded.

Four years back, I was a clerk in one of the most respectable and influential houses in Portsmouth, receiving an excellent salary, and, upon the whole, most comfortably settled—far more so than the majority of the young men of my own station in the town: and yet I was not happy—far, far from it. I grumbled at the regularity of attention which my situation required; I deemed my labour ill paid; and I envied every one I met, whose lot in life appeared better cast than my own; little reflecting how many secret miseries poison the existence of those who appear in public most smiled upon by fortune.

The loss of the *Royal George* was ever a favourite topic of conversation with the people of Portsmouth, even when half a century had elapsed since the occurrence; and, indeed, the interest connected with the subject was constantly kept alive by the numerous projects and suggestions for raising the sunken vessel, or destroying the wreck, that needy speculators were perpetually starting. To myself, I will confess, the whole affair was one of deep and constant thought. I had heard the various accounts of the accident; of the heavy bags of gold that were on board at the time, to pay the seamen: of the watches, jewels, and other valuable articles, that the tradespeople had sent for sale; and all this was still there—there, within the cumbersome and sea-worn timbers of the ill-fated ship, lying as useless, at the bottom

of the sea, and as comparatively worthless, as the rocks themselves.

Many, many evenings have I sat upon the shore, lulled into contemplation by the low ripple of the tide, when the last red gleam of the sun, ere he sank behind the Isle of Wight, illumined the spot where that majestic vessel went down, and wished I had power to roam over her sea-bound hoards for one short hour, and appropriate to myself all I could collect from her stores of value in that time. Many times have I longed for the power of those beings in the *Arabian Nights*, who could live under water; and thought, with what selfish and unseen joy, I could then revel amidst the gold and treasures that the hulk contained!

It was somewhere about this period that a man came to Portsmouth, with permission from the Admiralty, to carry on some experiments connected with the possibility of conducting different submarine operations, independent of the diving-bell. This incident changed the entire current of my thoughts. I watched his experiments with an intensity of interest that, I am fain to believe, exceeded that of the person himself. I saw him descend in his dress from a small vessel, to the wreck of the *Royal George*;—I noted the length of time he was enabled to remain under water;—I watched his return with divers small articles—as oyster-shells, nails, &c., which he had picked from the wreck; and from that period I contemplated but one subject;—it was the idea of going down myself! It cost me many sleepless nights to bring my scheme to perfection; nor was the working out of my plans confined to night alone; I thought of it always. I neglected my business; I received endless reprimands

from my employers for orders forgotten, and commissions uncared for; and, at last, I was discharged, because they found they could no longer trust me, from my undeviating forgetfulness.

As soon as I was turned away, I hired a small room in — street, and commenced my operations. The first thing I did was to purchase a quantity of Macintosh's waterproof cloth, with which I intended to form my diving dress. I contrived to cut out a very fair set of patterns, and these I got a journeyman tailor, who lodged in the house, to sew together; after which, I daubed the seams with Indian rubber dissolved in naphtha, some of which I obtained at the chemist's, and then, before it was dry, I pressed strips of the fabric on them with a hot iron, by which I made the whole garment perfectly impermeable. My next task was to make the head-piece. To effect this, I procured some stout iron wire, and bent it into a sort of frame, of the shape I had seen the diver wear. I secured these different pieces together by twisting finer wire round them; and then covered the whole with the same waterproof cloth which I had used for the rest, fitting some pieces of glass carefully in front, to enable me to perceive objects around me. I fastened some roughly-shaped gloves and boots to the arms and legs of the dress, and fixed them in a similar manner to the seams; and when I had entirely completed the whole apparel, I put it on, and walked in it about my room the whole evening, delighted beyond measure at my contrivance. It cost me something considerable, with all my economy, it is true; but I looked upon it as the means of leading me to immense wealth, and I deemed the money invested in a highly profitable scheme.

My next object was to provide for the transmission of

a supply of air to the interior of the hood, as I termed it, adequate to the support of respiration under water. Aided by a smattering of mechanical knowledge that I possessed, I was not long in fashioning a sort of air-pump, by adding some valves and stopcocks to an old garden-syringe, which I purchased at a broker's near my lodgings; and this I connected to the hood by long pipes of the cloth, closed in the same manner as the seams of my dress. I likewise procured a lantern, which I rendered waterproof by similar means; and then I joined it to the head-piece by another pipe, having observed that there was generally a superfluity of air, from the bubbles I had seen rising over the diver's head, which marked his situation in the water.

And now only one point remained to care about; but that was the most difficult—it was to seek a confederate. Not but that I believe I could have got many to join me in my foolhardy enterprise; but they would have expected an equal share of the proceeds, and this it was not my intention to allow. Still, I could not do without a companion to mind the boat above, and, more especially, to supply me with air. I had, at one time, formed a wild scheme of borrowing a goat from an old man, at the edge of the common, who had trained it to run round in a wheel, and assist in making string; but the insanity of trusting my life to the operations of an animal, soon made me give up the scheme I had formed of constructing some rough machinery, to be turned by a similar wheel, which, acting upon a parallel motion, or rack and pinion, might work the pump. At last, chance threw the required assistance in my way. There was a poor creature living in the town at the time, named, or rather called, Harry Weston, whom I selected for my companion. He

was not exactly in his right senses, nor was he completely an idiot ; but at that nice balance between the two which kept him from being the sport of the street boys, whilst it gained the pity, or sympathy, of the charitable people in the neighbourhood. He got his living by carrying out parcels from the coach-offices to their final destination, or by running on errands, and performing divers odd jobs for the inhabitants ; and he generally bore a good character for sobriety and honesty. It was this harmless individual that I fixed upon as my associate. I brought him to my lodgings, and bound him down by the most horrible oaths I could invent to frighten him, and promises of large reward, to serve me as I should direct, without ever uttering a syllable to mortal of my schemes ; and then, making an appointment with him for an evening in the next week, I gave him a trifling sum as an earnest of my future bounty. Poor wretch ! he never lived to receive it.

The intervening days lagged slowly by, and the eventful night at last arrived. As soon as it was dusk, with the assistance of Weston, I carried my apparatus, piece-meal, down to the beach on Southsea common, and then concealed them in one of the bathing-machines which are always stationed there ; leaving him to watch them whilst I repaired to the Point, for the purpose of procuring the boat I had bespoken a few days before. She was an old man-of-war's gig, with gunwales rather higher than ordinary, and low thwarts, which gave her a security better calculated for our operations. I pulled round to the beach, near the common, and took Weston and my contrivances on board, and then we started again for the scene of my venture. There was very little wind, and the sea was as calm as glass ; which circumstances were,

of course, in our favour. When we got to the buoy which marks the situation of the *Royal George*, we fastened the boat to it, and I commenced arraying myself in my diving costume. This finished, with the exception of the headpiece, I threw overboard a rope-ladder, having two small grapnels attached to its inferior extremities; and when I had ascertained that these had laid hold of some portion of the wreck, I made fast the upper ends to one of the seats of the boat. I next sounded the depth with a lead-line, and arranged my waterproof pipes accordingly, by means of some taps I had purchased at a gas-fitter's; allowing an extra length or two for my movements. In about half an hour from our first fixing the gig to the buoy, I had made all close and ready, and prepared to descend. I felt no timidity—the bare recollection of the wealth reported to be engulfed with the vessel, which I might, perhaps, accumulate, drove every other feeling from my mind.

With a last injunction for unremitting work and attention, on the part of Weston, I stepped on to the ladder, and commenced my task. What was my delight on finding that my schemes answered, as I saw through the glass, in my hood, the green water ascend higher than the level of my face, and finally close over my head, whilst my respiration continued free and unembarrassed. There was one unpleasant sensation, but this was not of sufficient consequence to annoy me. At every stroke of the pump above, that forced a fresh quantity of air down the pipe, I experienced a feeling of *tense* pain on the drums of my ears, of which I had heard the men in the diving-bells sometimes complain; but this I in great measure alleviated, by making frequent attempts at deglutition. My lantern, also, preserved the flame within it

admirably ; and its trifling consumption of air tended, in a measure, to relieve the pressure in the head-piece. I descended gradually and carefully, step by step, and at last, to my great joy, stood on a portion of the wreck. I found the grapnels had caught on a large spar that lay completely across the ship, kept firmly in its place by a gun, which had, probably, rolled over it when the accident occurred. With some little caution I crawled along it, and, at length, stood upon the deck. And here, for the first time, I became aware of the singular assistance of my light. Everything around me was plainly discernible, when the rays, cast through a large bull's-eye, were directed towards the object, only appearing as if a dull, greenish mist encircled it. I well remember the stems of the masts, with their coating of barnacles—the masses of shell-work and weeds that incrustated the guns, still outwardly preserving their shape—the very bulwarks, with their rings of green and cankered metal attached ; and the blackened pieces of timber that were grouped around me, from which myriads of strange polypi threw out their long streaming arms in quest of prey. The deck was nearly a foot deep in sand, and, as I had supposed, not level ; but still the declivity to larboard was not too steep to preclude my keeping a firm footing. An immense quantity of corroded blocks, tackle, &c., was lying about in confusion, enveloped by perfect groves of tall sea-weed ; and these floated about like monstrous snakes, twisting and undulating in all directions.

I cleared away a few trifling impediments with a light boat-hook which I carried in my hand ; and moved cautiously forward in the direction where I expected to find the entrance to the chief cabin. I was not long in reaching it, but experienced some little difficulty in

descending the stairs that led to it, as the passage was partly choked up with sand and *débris* from the wreck. At the third step I dislodged some large mass from its position. By my light I perceived a number of fish, such as sand-eels and small crabs, that had been disturbed from it ; and, directly afterwards, upon kicking it with my foot, I was horrified at perceiving a human skull, to which some scraps of colourless flesh and ligaments were still adhering, roll down the inclined plane of sand that covered the ladder, towards the door. My first impulse was to return immediately ; but, reflecting that all I had striven for was probably within my grasp, my thirst for gain once more conquered every other feeling.

With some trouble I made my way into the cabin. The doors were open—they had probably been so at the time of the catastrophe, and the subsequent accumulation of sand and mud had kept them so. I drew the air-pipe down towards me, and found that I had still length enough to spare for my operations ; at the same time I was convinced that my assistant was diligently supplying me with the means of respiration. I was now in the centre of the cabin, and an awful scene presented itself. Every portion of the wood-work, at least, as nearly as I could determine by approaching my lantern closely to it, was black, from the action of the sea ; and, like the masts above, incrustated with groups of barnacles. The floor was a foot deep in sand ; and on its surface lay more oblong heaps, which I discovered, upon examination, to be also human bodies, round whose half-devoured remains shreds of clothing still floated. I could not move a step without treading upon one ; and each that I thus disturbed fell to pieces immediately, surrounding me with a cloud of its sickening particles, and numbers of huge

shell-fish, who were enjoying their unholy meal therefrom, and who crawled off with their long spidery legs, in all directions.

Still, I came to no treasure: I had fallen in with none of the bags of gold which I heard were on board at the time of the accident. There were many corroded naval implements lying about, but these were not what I wanted. I examined every heap that rose above the general level of the floor, with the most diligent investigation, but without reward. Sometimes I exposed the tattered remnant of an article of clothing, a seaman's hat, a telescope, or something equally valueless to myself; but, more generally, similar objects to the above-mentioned fragments of mortality shocked me with their presence. At the side of the cabin was a small closet, having a glass door; and towards this I bent my way, thinking it might be the repository of some precious articles. But how was I horrified on approaching it! On directing my light through its still unbroken panes, I saw a dreadful corpse, that gibbered and grinned directly in my face; it was the body of some poor creature, who had, perhaps, been forced in there at the first rush of the water, and the door closing upon him, had kept out the sand and marine insects that everywhere else abounded. The sea-water had acted as a preservative, and the body still retained the perfect semblance of a human form; but the face was blanched and coddled—one of the eyes had dissolved, and the other was opaque, and apparently congealed; while the relaxed ligaments allowed the lower jaw to fall and rise with every vibration of the sea, in the mockery of a dreadful grin. The hair, too, floated in the water, giving a semblance of motion to

the whole features, which wore an expression of hideous merriment.

Faint with terror and disgust, I turned from the loathsome spectacle, and moved slowly and laboriously away. I approached the table of the cabin; a half-opened drawer was at its extremity, and when I had cleared away the envelope of sand, I discovered it was nearly filled with bags of coin. All, then, was accomplished; the long-coveted treasure lay, in greater part, beneath my grasp! I raised my lantern eagerly, to inspect the contents, when, to my extreme terror, I perceived that there was water in it half-way up to the bull's-eye, and the light not half-an-inch above the surface. The dreadful anticipation of inevitable darkness now burst on me, and a moment of intense fear, amounting almost to stupefaction, succeeded. I began hastily to collect the small canvass bags, and stow them in my girdle; but three remained, and I stretched my hand out to seize them. In the hurry and anxiety of the moment, I threw my lantern slightly out of the perpendicular, the water within it immediately washed over the light, and it was extinguished!

* * * * *

I know not how the subsequent five minutes past. The sensations of years of terror, agony, and the expectations of approaching death, were condensed in that period. My first recollection was, that I observed a gleam of light where the windows of the cabin were situated; but it was of the faintest kind. I afterwards ascertained that it was a moonlight night, and the beams had penetrated thus far through the sea;—but this was no guide for me. I was totally unconscious by what direction I had entered

the cabin ; and I did not dare to move unless towards these windows. Then I thought that Weston would tire at his work—that his strength would not allow him to keep pumping so long, whatever his will might be, and I should miserably perish. Anon, the thought came that I was alone—alone, amidst a crowd of dead bodies and hideous marine monsters—alone with that gibbering and awful corpse, whose face peered at me through the darkness, in my imagination, and pressed his clammy, soddened cheek against me—*alone, at the bottom of the sea !*

I gained one of the windows ; it was open, or, rather, the frames had been carried away by the constant action of the waves. I thought I would climb through it, and so ascend, for I was an excellent swimmer. But then the air-pipe kept me back ; and it was even now becoming tight, as I reached the extent of its length. A new idea arose, bringing fresh hope with it, and I wondered I had not thought of it before :—I could use the pipe as a clue, and so return by following its course. I left the window, and prepared to make the attempt, when I felt a violent tug, that nearly pulled the head-piece from the rest of my dress. Another, and another, succeeded, and then, in an instant, I felt the tense air-pipe give way—it had broken.

But one resource was left : I clambered through the cabin window, and attempted to rise, but the pipe had caught some projection, and restrained me, and I already perceived that the supply of air was stopped. I seized a knife from my girdle, and cut the tube off close to my head. The water rushed into the hood as I performed this action, but I was enabled to rise directly, as the sea roared and bubbled in my ears, with the noise of thunder. I struck upwards, still keeping my knife in my hand ;

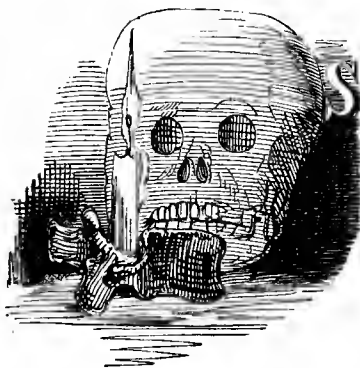
and in half a minute I had reached the surface. To rip up my hood, and cast it from me, was the work of an instant. As I regained my vision, I perceived, by the moonlight, that my boat was gone, but the buoy was still floating at its usual spot. Swimming towards it, I was enabled to recover myself, and take breath as I rested, hanging on to its ring. From the appearance of the distant vessels, near the beach, which were riding at anchor, I saw it was high-water, and another fearful truth burst upon me. The rope-ladder, which the grapnels held fast to the wreck, had drawn the boat under as the tide rose, and with it, my hapless assistant !

I felt at my girdle for the bags of gold : they were all gone, through the hasty manner in which I had secured them, and my struggles in coming to the surface. I tore my dress from me in raving passion, and cast it to the waves. In my under-clothes, which consisted of nothing but a common check shirt and a pair of coarse Holland trousers, I swam to land ; and, on reaching the stony beach, I sank on it in a swoon, overcome by my intense exertions.

I was found there the next morning, and carried to my lodgings. A long illness succeeded ;—I kept my bed for three months, and arose a maniac. I was told I talked about the wreck, and its fearful contents, during my fever, but I found my attendants merely looked upon it as the raving of delirium. As time passed I recovered my reason, but the remembrance of the circumstances connected with my rash venture must embitter my life until its close. I procured a moderate appointment through the interest of some friends, and to-morrow I sail for Australia.

A STRANGE VISIT.

THE STORY OF A DISSECTING-ROOM PORTER.



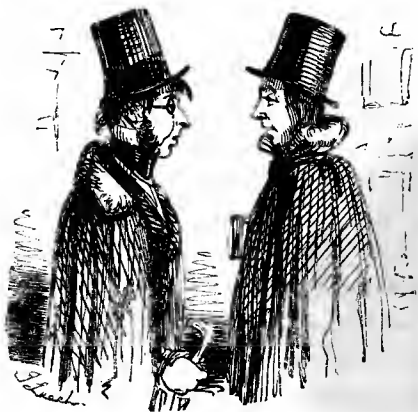
OME twelve years ago, at the time I was employed at the W—— Street School of Medicine, I received directions one evening to apply the next night at the prison in the Old Bailey, where there would be the body of a criminal for me to convey back, that had been made over to our

establishment. The Anatomy Bill had not passed then, and we got our subjects as we could, sometimes paying a very high price for them; so that we considered this a very fortunate grant, and one not to be passed by. I was told that the body in question was that of a murderer, who would be executed the next morning for some fatal piece of business which had taken place in a hell at the West End. It is of no use mentioning the name now, for it would do little good, and the affair has long been forgotten; but he was reported to be very well connected, and the whole transaction caused a great sensation at the time.

It was on a dismal evening, towards the close of November, 18—, that I set off from school on my way to Newgate. A heavy orange-coloured fog, a species of smoke with the jaundice, had settled over the streets,

through which the foot-passengers were moving like so many spectres; and the lamps barely cast their light from one to the other, whilst everybody's feet were sliding about on the black greasy pavement, as if they had been climbing up inclined planes of dirty soap. I got a horse and cart from the mews at the back of the school; and taking the laboratory man of the hospital with me, we drove down to the court-yard of the Sessions House. Here I gave up my order, and the body was brought down in a shell, and then placed in the cart; after which we covered it with a tarpaulin, and turned back again on our way home. When we reached the side door of the school we carried in the object of our journey, and then my companion took away the cart, and I prepared to inject the arteries against the next morning.

Getting a subject ready for the dissecting-room was a long job at that time, for cold compositions were not used to fill the vessels, and we had to place the entire body in a bath, and use everything quite hot. I wished to get it finished that night, for our professor of anatomy



had taken a new whim into his head, of lecturing at eight o'clock in the morning, to excite habits of industry amongst the students, as he used to say. He never got a good class, and no wonder; who in their senses would ever get up to come to lecture at that time? His general attendants were the regular muffs of the school—men



who wore thick shoes, beaver gloves, and cloth cloaks with curly white stuff at the collars, who took notes of all the lectures, and talked about passing the Hall on Thursday, and the College on the Friday after, without grinding; and the thorough-going second-season out-and-outers, who had been flaring up all night,

and used to come to the school in the morning direct from the wine rooms, or taverns, or wherever else they had been, and take a nap in the museum, on the stairs by the side of the stove.

However, whether the professor had a good class or not, the subject was always obliged to be ready ; and, as he wanted the upper extremities for the next morning, I got to work. I looked out my pipkins and syringes, lighted my copper fire, and was mixing my vermilion and size, with all the rest of it, when I thought I heard a slight tinkle at the door-bell. I wondered who could have any business with me at that time of night ; and expecting to find nobody if I went (for the little boys in the court were mightily fond of ringing and running away again) I kept on with my work. Presently, however, it sounded again, but still very gently. Now, when persons indulge themselves with a runaway pull, they generally make “a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether,” more especially if they carry the handle away with them,—a feat easily accomplished by drawing out the knob to its utmost length, and then turning it short down, as can be perfectly testified by the memory of the oldest inhabitants of Gower Street and Torrington Square. But this second ring was so quiet that it struck me it might be some old resurrection man come about a body, so I took up the vertebra that I used for a candlestick, and went to the door. How was I astonished to see—not a resurrectionist, not a student slightly elevated, not a pot-boy for the empty pewters which our gentlemen had been drinking their half-and-half from, but a young lady, dressed in a handsome cloak and veil, leaning against the post of the lamp at the door, and crying ready to break her heart. My first idea

was that she had come from the dispensary, with a letter for one of the students to attend; and then it struck me all of a sudden, that she was some friend of the poor fellow down stairs; and, as it proved, I was right.

I have seen many beauties in my time, but I never saw such a handsome face as that lady's when she addressed me on opening the door. I am old now and care little for womankind. When dead they are good subjects for show-preparations to put in museums, and that is all: but I have often thought upon her pale, very pale countenance, as she turned to speak. Her complexion was as death-like as that of the corpse below, except that her eyelids were crimsoned with weeping; and her long black hair hung all over her shoulders in heavy waving curls, quite beautiful to look at—none of the flat close bands, which the women wear at present plastered down their cheeks, as if to keep them from falling out.

"Is this the W—— Street School of Medicine?" she asked, in a timid broken voice.

I returned an answer in the affirmative, and ventured to inquire "what she might want there?"

"I will tell you all directly," she replied, still sobbing violently, "but, for God's sake, allow me a few moments' rest, for I am almost dead." And as I opened the door a little wider she entered the passage; and sitting down upon the stairs leading up to the anatomical theatre, burst into a fresh flood of tears.

I closed the door, and stood for a minute or two quite confounded at the appearance of so unusual a visitor. At length she raised her head again, and asked me if I had not brought the body there of the criminal who had been executed at Newgate that morning. I replied that

it was now down stairs ; still unable to perceive her drift clearly.

" Oh ! take me to him ! " she exclaimed, rising hurriedly from her seat, and seizing my arm. " Take me to him, I implore you ; I ought to go, for I have more right than any one else on earth, although he is a murderer—an executed criminal. I have watched at the prison gates the whole day, in the hopes of tracking his remains through the cold wet streets to their destination, and I followed your cart to this school. You must let me have the body at any price," she added, in a low deep tone. " God knows, I have suffered much for him ; I have given up friends, home, reputation, all for his affection ; and it has come to this ! " And she again began to cry terribly.

In this novel situation, I don't exactly know what I ought to have done—what I *did*, I will inform you. " The sight of a female in distress," as the good characters say in minor melo-dramas, quite overcame me, and I do believe if she had told me to carry the body away myself, on my back through the streets, I should have done it. As it was I took up my light, and half carrying, half leading her down the steep narrow steps that led to the preparation-room of the dead house, I allowed her to enter.

She was the first visitor of the kind, I reckon, that had ever been admitted within its walls ; and a strange scene enough the cellar presented, with its quiet lifeless inmate, the weeping lady, and myself. Her youth and beauty formed an odd contrast to the grim and half-dried preparations that hung about, but she saw none of them. Her whole being was centered in one object ; and as she threw herself upon the body, which was lying upon a handbier, covered by an old sack, at the end of the room,

I thought, what a strange group we should have made for an artist.

"I did not think we should meet again here!" she exclaimed through her tears, as she uncovered the face, and brushed away the sawdust of the coffin, which adhered to the hair, with her small white hand; and then she saw the purple mark round the neck, bearing the impression of every strand of the rope. Poor thing! how she shuddered when she first looked at it. I felt myself in a very awkward situation, and did not very well know what to say or do. My companion, however, spared me the trouble, by demanding, after a short pause, if it were practicable to remove the body from the school; and she accompanied her request by drawing a purse from her reticule, and offering me the whole of its contents to aid her. Now, I declare honestly, that her distress moved me more than the gold she promised. After a little hesitation—for I knew I was doing wrong—I agreed to let her have it; and I even went myself into the mews, to see if I could get the cart again that had conveyed it to the school. Luckily the man I had engaged was still smoking a short pipe in the harness-room, and I returned with him to the school. We placed the body in another shell, and carried it up-stairs together, the lady directing the man to keep near her as she walked along the pavement.

So ended this singular interview; and I saw no more of her from that day to this. Who she might be I never could find out; but I do not think she was his wife, for there was no wedding-ring on her finger. I found upwards of ten pounds in the purse; and the driver told me that he received two guineas for his trouble, and that he left his charge at some small house on the site of the

present buildings at the eastern angle of the Regent's Park, but he did not think he should recollect the precise spot again.

I went that night to the anatomical professor, and told him the whole affair. He grumbled a little at first, and then said I was to get out the preparations of the internal ear for demonstration the next morning—the lecturer's last resource when he has no fresh subject, unless he chooses to send for some sheep's eyes to the nearest butcher's, and exhibit the cornea and crystalline lens—another excellent refuge for the destitute.

PROPOSALS FOR A NEW MATRIMONIAL AGENCY OFFICE.

WE are daily receiving letters from young ladies in all parts of London and the country, complaining of the present most appalling state of proposal-destitution to which they are reduced. The various stories of distress in the philandering districts are literally fearful. A correspondent relates the case of one party of young ladies, who have subsisted without a single offer during the entire season; and it is feared that, should the present Government take no measures to alleviate this state of destitution, the fair sufferers will rise *en masse*, and marry all the existing bachelors by sheer force.

To meet this crisis, we have determined upon opening a matrimonial agency, with a society for protection against flirts; and, in order that any young lady may make her *locale* known to any gentleman who has paid her more than ordinary attention, we have instituted a

central office, where, in the fashion of shipping intelligence, every information will be afforded. The lists at present thus stand; and male coquets, after perusing them, will have no excuse for want of attention on the plea of not knowing the locality of their *innamorata*.

MARRY-TIME INTELLIGENCE.

DEAL, Sept. 24th.—Arrived the *Blanche M*—; the *Amy B*—; the *Augusta S*—; the *Louisa A*—; and the *Anne Eliza C*—.

BRIGHTON, Oct. 7th, wind S.W.—A pink bonnet of small dimensions was seen off the Old Steine, and presumed to be that of the *Mary F*—. A small lavender glove was afterwards picked up on the beach, which strengthens the supposition.

YOUNG LADIES SPOKEN WITH.

The *Ellen Howard*, of Bryanstone Square, at Windsor, on the 21st instant, obliged to put into a pastry-cook's shop during a sudden storm.

COWES.—The *Harriet de Vere* ran on shore here this morning, with loss of sandal, from the Southampton steamboat, having been on board to wish her cousins good-bye, just as the last bell rang for starting.

The *Alicia Hamilton*, of Kensington, on the cliffs at Ramsgate, during a gale of wind; hair rather deranged, and parasol blown inside out.

The *Fanny Lewis*, of Hornsey, in great distress off the North Foreland, in the ladies' cabin of the *City of Boulogne*.

The *Caroline Daventry*, of Park Crescent, scudding with close reefed topsails, in a gallopade, at an evening party, in Gower Street.

CLEARED OUTWARDS WITH CARGO.

Several glass coaches, containing the young ladies of Mrs. Mindcrammer's establishment at Chiswick, with their luggage and tapestry-frames, bound to various parts of London for the Easter recess.

A travelling carriage, from Sir Henry Fairlove's in Portman Square, with his three daughters inside, the governess and parrot on the box, and the ladies' maid in the rumble. Sir Henry says he is going abroad to educate his children; the world reports it to retrench his expenses.

CLEARED OUTWARDS FOR LADING.

The Dowager Lady Bobbleton, with empty pockets, to the gaming-tables of the Conversations-haus at Baden-Baden. N.B. She takes her niece with her.

Fancy Fairs will be held weekly, and a very liberal supply of guinea pen-wipers, sovereign card-racks, ten-shilling perforated card sticking-plaster cases, and half-a-crown coloured-paper nothings, will be provided for the stalls. Ladies paying a trifle extra will be accommodated with a tent lined with pink calico, for the sake of throwing a fascinating glow over the features;* and when a lady is observed to be holding any very interesting conversation with a gentleman, proper persons will be appointed to prevent other would-be purchasers from intruding. Everybody inclined to argue upon the propriety of giving change for ten-pound notes will be immediately taken into custody by the police.

The institution has it also in contemplation to give an uninterrupted series of balls during the season, at which

a number of half-pay officers, of stern and portly aspect, will be engaged, for the express purpose of asking nervous young gentlemen their intentions, if they are seen flirting with any young lady who is a shareholder in the Agency.



Dahlia Shows will also take place during the autumn, as everybody is aware of the incalculable benefit arising from pushing round the narrow passage of the marquees to see the flowers; and carriages and tickets will be provided, free of all expense, to take the subscribers to the *fêtes* at Chiswick. This arrangement is especially dwelt upon, as it is extremely easy for a young lady to “miss” her party in the crowd. From these meetings all single aunts, poor cousins, and confirmed old bachelors, will be

scrupulously excluded; prettier younger sisters will also only be admitted under severe restrictions. And if there is a large family of girls, all single, this circumstance will be kept strictly private, as it alone often deters many a young gentleman from proposing to one of them, for fear he should at the same time *marry the whole family*, or be perpetually overdone by his wife's sisters coming "to stay a little time with her."

THE BUREAU DRAWER.

AMONGST all the relics of furniture, of a time gone by, which that tyrant, Fashion, in spite of her taste for the *renaissance*, does not allow to hold the same station in her boudoir as formerly, is the old bureau. Well do we remember the respect in which we held this antique pile of drawers and pigeon-holes, and gilt handles, when we were in childhood. Our bureau stood in the corner of our bed-room; it was of walnut-tree wood, and contained six long shallow drawers in its front, with a large flap at top, that turned over upon two supports, which were pulled out as occasion required, to form a sort of secretary. And what a source of amusement did it then disclose to our infantile gaze; for when we first recollect it, we were little enough to sit on its leaf without overbalancing it, and so inspect its compartments at leisure. What rows of small drawers, and miniature closets over them; with tiny doors panelled with old looking-glass, and developing more shelves and secret recesses within, with locks to every division ornamented with large tarnished 'scutcheons of brass and gilt scroll-work. We

knew its contents by heart, but we never tired of inspecting them. Some of the drawers were full of bugles and spangles, that had helped to brighten the ball-dresses of our ancestors. Others contained old books in glossy harlequin bindings, illustrated by coarse wood-cuts, brown with age; and through some of them the worm had eaten a tunnel that went from beginning to end, leaving a small round hole in every page.

There were old lockets in some of the little closets, of plain and antique make, enclosing morsels of hair of various shades and in different forms, but no one could tell to whom they had belonged. They had been there many, many years, long before grandpapa was a little boy; for he had played with them when young, in the same manner as we then did, and they were ancient even in his boyhood. And yet these old lockets had at some time been objects of interest to their possessors. Tales of broken hearts and crushed hopes, poignant and severe at the time, might have been connected with their being; and sad farewells and vain remorse, with tear-bringing recollections of the lost and loved, might have woven their gloomy chain around those mute appealers to the memory; but their owners had died long since; the very stone on their graves had become worn and broken, and the inscriptions of their names were no longer visible, even if the long coarse grass that overshadowed them had been cleared away. We did not join in the laugh at these tokens of former love, when we saw their quaint forms and devices; we returned them to their depository with silent respect, as we thought that, many years hence, similar trifles of our own might perchance call forth an idle smile, when all had passed away but the recollection of the old man who had left these love-gages, of apparently such small value, behind him.

Some other of the recesses contained curious shells, old whist-markers, and foreign beads of gaudy colours: and in the pigeon-holes were bundles of aged and half-legible-letters, whose seals were quite flat and blank with pressure, or crumbling with antiquity. The great drawers in front were kept locked; but we remember to have peeped into them once, and seen a quantity of ancient wearing apparel, of faded and rustling silk, mingled with fragments of broad dingy lace, and odd pieces of flowered and quilted satin, like old gentlemen's dressing-gowns in sentimental comedies. Altogether, we looked upon our old friend with mixed feelings of awe and affection; and when we began to store our own collections in its recesses, it assumed a value and importance in our eyes, fit for the guardian of such treasures.

Time passed on; we grew up, and went abroad in the world. The romance of life commenced, and our mind and sentiments changed under the influence of its vicissitudes. We began to think of childhood as a by-gone dream—the bright and happy vision of summer skies, and field-flowers, and butterflies, that only infancy can picture; and we mused, with half-pleasurable, half-melancholy retrospection, over the days when we played with the shells and spangles on the flap of the old bureau.

When we returned home again, our old friend was gone. The family had increased, and more room was required in the house; the more cumbrous portion of the furniture was condemned to the appraiser, and the bureau was carried away in his van, and soon forgotten by all except ourselves. Still we lamented its departure; and determined, if ever we came across an article of similar make, to purchase it, and consign it to our own room, were it only to awaken old associations. Fortunately for our intentions, we one day saw a counterpart of our lost

treasury amongst some broken and imperfect furniture at a second-hand shop in the neighbourhood. The price was moderate, and we paid for it directly, nor would we wait to have it cleaned before it was brought home; we kept that pleasure for ourselves. In routing out the dust and cobwebs from its drawers and closets, we discovered in one of them a bundle of papers, tied together with some bobbin. We were about to commit them to the flames, when a few words caught our attention, and induced us to look over the rest. A strange collection of letters, papers, &c., indeed, they proved; put together without the least regard to order or subject. We conceived, and with some plausibility, that the piece of furniture had belonged to the editor of a periodical, and that these various documents were contributions from different hands. Such as they are we now present them to the reader.

I.

MASTER PETER DODDLE TO HIS PARENTS.

(Very nicely written in small hand.)

MY DEAR PARENTS,

I have written to inform you that our Midsummer recess commences on Wednesday, June 17; and our vacation will terminate on Friday, July 24th. I trust you will find I have made creditable progress in the various branches of study I have pursued during the past half-year. Anticipating much pleasure in meeting you, believe me to remain,

My dear Parents,

Your affectionate son,

PETER DODDLE.

Apsley House Academy,
Peckham.



[Over-leaf, in another hand, and apparently much hurried :

Dear mother old Fuzzyscratch has gone Out of the Room and I write this on the sly I writ the other fourteen Times Before the writing master let it Go and now he has Put all new Capitals in and painted every letter all Over I didn't make it up as we all writ the Same which was chalked by Mr. Splitnib' on the black Board and we copied it except the orphans who didn't Write holiday letters at All please I want a new Pair of trowsers by when I come home as These are all in strips and no Buttons because the boys have cribbed the moulds out Of them to make teetotums to spin on their slates and I tie them up With string which cuts my shoulders and please all my socks are wore out and my shoes havn't no soles which Lets in water and Young monk took the crown of my hat to make a target and then Borrowed my watch to Turn into a steam engine which didn't do and now he can't put it Together again because he's lost some wheels which he says Won't hinder its going At all I havn't got any money and Owe ninepence So I think I had better borrow some of Wimples Because he isn't coming back after the holidays unless you Send me some so no more at Present from your dutiful son Peter doddle.

II.

POETRY FOR A YOUNG LADY'S ALBUM,

To be headed by an Oriental tinting of an impossible butterfly, with crooked horns and triangular wings, hovering over a blue rose; with some very foreign shells and sea-weed in the distance, like miniature pickled cabbage. On the opposite side, two drawings, in the middle of perforated cards, of the Bridge of Sighs, and the Fishing Temple at Virginia Water.

The cloudless ecstasy of pleasure,
Floating o'er memory's sunlit sea,
On other harps may tune its measure;
Alas! it yields no life to me.
For my mind's odour has departed,
By beaming misery too compress'd,
And left remembrance broken-hearted
In the dead caverns of my breast.
No—I must live and laugh and scorn
The crowds that fling their spell around me;
Awaiting but sad joy's gay morn,
To burst the flimsy web that bound me.
I leave thee—o'er the world a rover,
False one! we ne'er may meet again;
Yet, if I get my business over,
I may return by the next train,
And blast thee with my scorching eye,
And palsied hand, and frenzied tone;
Then with the hate of agony,
Leave your dim grief to burn alone.—ADONAIS.

III.

An antique-looking paper, possibly intended for No. 636 of *The Spectator*, if a ninth volume had been published.

Nihil est, juvenes; tolerate labores.—PROPERT.

Nix my dolly pals, fake away.—AINSWORTH.

DEAR SPEC,

I am a young man of good connexions, and I love, and am beloved by, a young lady of surpassing beauty and moral excellence, but we have neither of us much money. Our allowance is sufficient for us each at present, but we wish to know your opinion as to its being adequate if we marry.

Yours, very faithfully,

RALPH RASHTOP.

Keep single as you are. It is much better to pine for love than for want of something to eat; and although the little blind god is all very delightful in his way, he cannot make a beef-steak pudding, or put potatoes under a shoulder of mutton, unless you find the materials. Notwithstanding you imagine you can both live upon nothing at all beyond each other's society, you will be sadly deceived if you try; and recollect you *may* get tired even of that. Do not reckon too much upon the clean hearth and tea-kettle anticipations of marriage; but picture more strongly a dull wet Sunday in a back parlour, six years hence, when you know each other's faces by heart, and increasing embarrassments are rising around you. There are few young men who fully weigh the giving up of the thousand bachelor pleasures, which must take place if they marry. They expect to lead the life of Leoni and Juliette at Venice, instead of the steady *ménage* of Madame de Wolmar and her sober spouse, in Switzerland. Possession cloy, and they get peevish and irritable on discovering their mistake. Look about you for ten years more, and then you may write to me again.

In the mean time flirt and chat with every pretty girl you like, but never come to pen and ink ; you may be asked your intentions, and unavoidably tumble into an engagement.

IV.

AN ACT FOR

amending the Representation of certain Public Sights, termed Equestrian Spectacles, in the habit of being represented at a favourite place of resort, termed the Royal Amphitheatre; Westminster Bridge.

~~WHEREAS~~ it has been the custom of divers ladies and gentlemen, young ladies and young gentlemen, maid-servants, apprentices, and little boys, to assemble night after night, between Easter Monday and a period in the autumn not fixed, in various different parts of the Royal Amphitheatre, according to the state of their pockets, then and there to behold divers gorgeous pageants and feats of horsemanship, known under the name of Equestrian Spectacles.

~~And whereas~~, although much delight is still experienced by the aforesaid apprentices and little boys, at the splendour of the pageant and humours of the arena, yet to the children of a larger growth who have been there before, much takes place that they had previously seen, heard, or expected to see or hear, insomuch that they can sometimes anticipate what is coming, to the detriment of that illusion and enjoyment which they ought to receive, after having separately and severally paid "Boxes 4s. Pit 2s. Gallery 1s. Doors open at half-past five, and commence at half-past six precisely. *Vivat Regina.*"

May it therefore please your Majesty, that it may be enacted ; ~~And be it enacted~~ that henceforth no person, on

taking front places for the boxes in the morning, be allowed to run up the half-dozen stairs beyond the box-office, and from the lobby to behold the Flying Devil of Chinese America practising his astounding performances by daylight, in the circus, in his shirt-sleeves and lace-up boots; and that when the evening arrives, no person having thus taken front places, presume to wish to go out for ginger-beer or oysters between the acts, to the annoyance of the nine rows of audience behind him, and the especial discomfiture of the fat old gentleman with the child on his knees, who sits on the flap-seat by the box-door.

And be it further enacted that no three gentlemen, going together to the boxes, shall push at the box-door in an unseemly manner, for fear of being the last to enter, and consequently, the one who will be expected to buy a bill for a shilling of the box-keeper; save and except they have made arrangements on their journey as to who shall thus pay, by the process of throwing a small coin in the air, speculating on its obverse and reverse as it descends.

And be it further enacted that in the bills of performance, such terms as "Double Platforms!!" "Triple Stud of Enchanted Steeds!!" "Tartar Horde of the Untamed Horses of the Wilderness!!!" "Triumphal Chariot of the Conquered Oracle!!!!" "Splendid Banquet of the Lion-tamer of the Deserts!!!!!" and the like, be studiously avoided and omitted; as calculated to intimidate people of weak nerves and moderate capabilities of understanding, and entirely to muddle what little intellect nature had allowed them, with a sense of overwhelming vastness. And that in the performances themselves, such characters as haughty tyrants, rash beardless boys, injured rightful heirs, young ladies in love with one man in a tin helmet, and forced to marry another in a tiger-

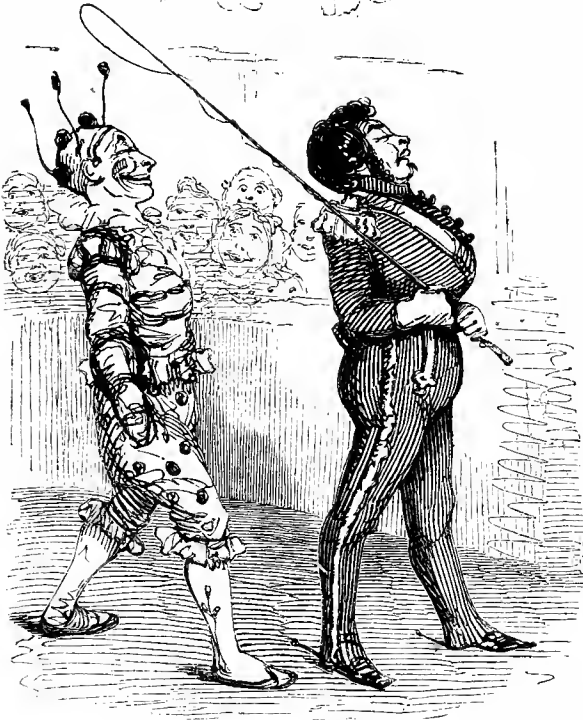
skin sort of Mackintosh cape, and comic cowardly soldiers in armour too big for them, always siding with the winning party, be hereafter abolished; and that such speeches as "Can I believe my eyes?" "It is as I suspected—all is still, and the tyrant slumbers!" "No, it isn't—yes it is—oh, yes, my heart tells me too, too well, it is my Afghar's silver trumpet's sound," be totally omitted. And that, in the terrific combats on narrow bridges, the retreating party shall not keep looking down behind him to avoid tumbling off the plank upon the man who turns the cascade below; nor shall the horse-soldiers whose trowsers are too long for them, hitch them up



when they dismount, in the manner of ladies crossing Oxford Street on a muddy day.

And be it further enacted, that, in processions, no person therein assisting shall run round the scene and appear twice; nor shall the trumpeters, as soon as they get behind the wings, slip off their tabards, lay down their instruments, and, enveloped in white robes, march on again as conquered Arabs; nor shall the men who carry the banners always keep one side to the audience, whichever way they themselves may turn; nor shall each English sailor, in a naval spectacle, fight and conquer more than a dozen of the besieged natives at once.

And be it further enacted, that when the scenes in the circus commence, the Merriman, Grotesque, or Clown, shall not, after the first equestrian feat, exclaim "Now I'll have a turn to myself," previous to his toppling like a coach-wheel round the ring; nor shall he fall flat on his face, and then collecting some saw-dust in his hand, drop it down from the level of his head, and say his nose bleeds; nor shall he attempt to make the rope-dancer's balance-pole stand on its end by propping it up with the said saw-dust: nor shall he after chalking the performer's shoes, conclude by chalking his own nose, to prevent his foot from slipping when he treads on it; nor shall he take long pieces of striped cloth and hold them up for Mr. Stickney to jump over, whilst his horse goes under; previous to which he shall not pull the groom off the stool, who holds the other end of the said cloth; neither shall he find any difficulty in holding it at its proper level; nor after having moved it higher and lower, shall he ask, "Will that do?" and on being answered in the affirmative, he shall not jump down and put his hands in his pockets, saying "I'm glad of it;" nor shall he pick up a small piece of straw for fear he should fall over it, and afterwards balance the



said straw on his chin as he runs about. Neither shall the Master of the Ring say to the Merriman, Grotesque, or Clown, when they are leaving the circus, "I never follow the fool, sir;" nor shall the fool reply, "Then I do," and walk out after him; nor, moreover, shall the Clown say that "the horses are as clever as the barber who shaved bald magpies at two-pence a dozen;" nor tell the groom in the red jacket and top boots, when he takes the said horses away, "to rub them well down with cabbage-pudding, for fear they should get the collywobbleums in their pandenoodles;" such speeches being manifestly very absurd and incomprehensible.

Saving always that the divers ladies and gentlemen, young ladies and young gentlemen, maid-servants, apprentices, and little boys who patronize the theatre should see no reason why the above alterations should be made; under which circumstances, they had better remain as they are.

[It is hoped that this Act will come into force as soon as the new theatre is finished.]

V

MRS. RAMSBOTTOM.

[A letter from that indefatigable tourist and graphic describer, which appears to have been intended for the *John Bull*.]

My dear Editor,—As it is some little time since I last wrote to you, I think you will be glad to hear what we have been about. I have been staying at Brighton for the benefit of the vapid bath, and have been bamboozed by Mohammets three times a-week, which has done my rheumatiz a world of good. I recovered so well that I have been enabled to cross over to Dip, so called on account of its sea-bathing, and from thence have come on to Paris with the Fulmers, where we arrived on the 25th instant. You are aware that I have been in Paris before, but I send you some accounts of different places which I did not notice in my former tower.

The morning after we arrived we hired an extempore servant, not having brought one with us. The French call him a *lack-a-daisy de place*. He is to show us all the lions; but, for my part, I have seen quite enough of wild beasts in England. We walked through the *Faux-pas* something, I forget the name, where the Bar-steel formerly stood; so called from the many iron bars to secure prisoners. We then returned, and crossed one of the

bridges, which the French call Ponds; I never could understand why. The name would be more appropriate to the water underneath. This took us to the Palace of the Looksombre; so called because it is in such a dull situation. Here we were indulged with a prohibition of pictures. There was a very fine one of Runymede presenting a Cup of Nectarine to the Gods; and another, of Morpheus perspiring all the Birds and Beasts with his Music. There were tigers, and lepers, and pantheons, and all sorts of animals, both bipod and tripod, a-dancing with all their might. I was much struck with a full-length portrait of a lady, painted by one M. Angelo—(?) whether the member of parliament. We afterwards visited a small private gallery of statuts, where we saw some very beautiful sculpture—particularly a head of Sisera, the great Roman orator, by the celebrated Canuto. Proceeding from thence, we looked into the Hospital for Incurables. I wonder they get any patients to go into it, if they cannot cure.

Returning home to our hotel, we were nearly run over. Lavy was so much frightened, that she went into violent high asterisks; but fortunately I had my bottle of romantic vinegar with me, which, with the help of some heart's-ease from a chymist's shop, soon put her to rights. I was a long time, however, before I could make the people understand me; for though I can parley French pretty well, I don't speak it geometrically, as my daughter does. The words are simple enough, but the idiotisms puzzle me.

Lavy was too weak to walk further, so we got into a poleacre—a thing like a hackney-coach. In the evening she was well enough to go with us to the theatre, where the play was Otho, the Moor of Venus. I didn't like

the man who did the Moor. They called him Tall-moor, but I thought him rather short. He was taller than Mr. Kean, to be sure. After all, it was not Shakspur's Otho, but only a French transportation, by one Lucy.

Early the next day we hired an overture for an excrescence to Versailles; Mr. Fulmer followed in a crabrollee, which is a large gig with a head. We passed the Place Louis Quinzy, where Louis the 19th was bulletined by Roguespear, and the other butchers of the Rational Convention. It makes one blood cradle to think of the many bloody asservations and massy curs which took place on this spot; and yet these wretches, like the Hunts, and the Watsons, and the Thistlewoods of our day, call themselves patriarchs.

We made a circus on our return to visit Moll-mason, the favourite retreat of Bunaparte, where he spent so much of his time with the Empress Josephus.

In the evening we went, by invocation, to a party at a French Marquizes. They called it a sorry one; but I thought everything very grand. The ladies pressed me to take a hand at cards, and several offered to give up their places in order to *take me in*, which was very complacent; but I did not see any cribbage-table, or all-fours, which are the only games I understand.

The next day we saw the King go to high Mars: he looks very infirm with the gout and rheum, and his legs were wrapped up in funnels. We saw a good many more sights, such as the Hospital of Saltpetre; the Malefactory of Goblins; the Ecole de Fallacy (which answers to our Pottecary's Hall,) and the Garden of Plants: by-the-bye, how could it be a garden of anything else? And, taking a short pommade in the Elizabeth Fields, we dined again at the Traitors, where we had soup made of potash, a hamlet, and some ciceroni. The waiter's name

I found was Garson, for everybody called him by his name. Indeed, this seems to be the general custom in Paris; for instance, we were in a shop the other day—by the bye, it was called a magazine, from which I concluded they sold gunpowder, and was terribly afraid of an explosion; but Mr. Fulmer assured me that everything in the shop might *go off* without any harm to us; but this is only by way of epilogue. To return from my aggression: I observed, whenever people came in to ask the price of anything, the mistress always called them by their christian names. The most common names were Frank and Sue, with now and then a Billy. Even the clerk at Mr. Roastchild's, the banker, when Mr. Fulmer went with me to present our letter of interdiction, called him Billy, which I certainly thought rather familiar; but Mr. F. showed no shagreen—he is always polite and indigent. The bankers gave us, amongst the rest, a very bright piece of gold; and on my asking what coin it was, they said a “Louis dis week.” I had seen a great many Louis, but none so late as this week; so I suppose there has just been a new coinage.

It will be expected that I shall say something of the political recurrences of the country I am visiting, particularly as so few visitors have diluted upon this tropic. The chamber of deputies are not chosen like our members of Parliament, but by electuary colleges, sent from each district, or aggrandisement. I have before described how the debates are carried on. There is a minister of war—a minister of moreen—of the home apartment, &c. &c. The minister for foreign affairs, it is said, has sent in his portmanteau to the king, and it is not yet known who is to be his predecessor.

This morning has been spent in deranging our future

plans. Lavy and I were for distending our tower into Italy : but Mr. Fulmer assuaged us from undertaking it at this season, especially as my daughter is rather delicate. I confess I should like to have gone to Rome, if it were only for the salt-water bathing. Lavy will have that it is an inland place ; but that can't be, for everybody has read of the sea of Rome. She says it is only a paper sea ; but that is nonsense. Besides, I should have liked to see the grand Furnival at Easter. It was then proposed that we should return by Belzebub and the low countries ; but I don't like going amongst low people ; I have never been used to it. We have at last determined to return through Normandie. So we shall embrocate at Dippe, and land at Brighton again, where we may have a chance of seeing Her Majesty (God bless her!) if she is still at the Paywilliam, which looks for all the world like a parcel of china jars on a tea-board. Besides, I want Lavy to try Mr. Mohammet's rapid bath, and get bamboosed, which, I think, will do her as much good as it did me. Mr. Fulmer strongly advises us to travel by the stage, and talks of going to the managerie to secure places for us ; but I do not much admire the dilly-jaunts, from what I have seen of them : they are great lumbering things, like a travelling show of the Bone-asses, or the Yorkshire Giant. I should prefer going in a carrots. I dread the journey, if we are to be jolted over the stones all the way, as we were in coming. I wish the roads were muckmodernized, as they are in England. We are only waiting now for our pass-pots, which are to be counteracted by the English convoy, and then visaveed by the French minister.

Believe me yours eternally,

LAVINIA RAMSBOTTOM.

CHRISTMAS PANTOMIMES.

“The delights—the ten thousand million delights of a pantomime, come streaming upon us now.”—DICKENS’S *Life of Grimaldi*.



UZZA for Christmas! the hobbling old year has nearly limped away, and with it, we hope, all of grief or sadness that has occurred to dim its progress: the time has arrived again when all that remains of harmless misrule and revelry in merrie England is about to revive from its long twelvemonth's trance, and once more kindle our hearts to enter into the honest mirth and hospitality of our forefathers, before they became too expensive in their pleasures, and too knowing for such simple merriment.

True it is, that the ancient glories of Christmas have faded around our hearths since the blaze of the yule-log threw its cheerful light over the bright armour and quaint mouldings, the rollicking guests and antique furniture, of the old family-hall. The din of the mummers, and the potent spirits of the wassail-bowl, no longer contribute to our revelry; the sickly melancholy of the modern drawing-room ballad has supplanted the homely Anglo-Norman carol; but, still, Christmas has returned, and with it such fun and joyousness as refinement now allows us to partake of.

At the head of all its gaieties, at least in our still childish opinion, stands the Pantomime. We really anticipate it for months before, and when, at last, the

name is announced in the bills, our expectation has arrived at a pitch that is actually intolerable. Come with us to the theatre, dear reader, and take your place beside us. But you must go to the pit if you are our companion, for we mean, in all good truth, to enjoy ourselves and scream with laughter. Besides, we have never seen a pantomime from any other part of the house since we were very little, and we wish to enter as much as possible into old Christmas feelings and associations, and forget all of sorrow that has crossed our path since we first saw the huge curtain rise upon its wonders. How full the house is! The first long piece has just finished, and everybody said simultaneously, as it concluded, "Now for the pantomime!" We are in an excellent humour with ourselves and everybody around us. We do not grumble, as usual, at the persevering apple-women, when they push by our legs between the rows, selling tenpenny books for a shilling; nor do we complain surlily of being too crowded; on the contrary, we are anxious that all should see the forthcoming spectacle, and enter into its fun as joyfully as ourselves. What a beautiful sight, too, is the multitude of children in the front rows! Look at that pretty rogue in the third box from the lamps; he has been asleep all through the tragedy, notwithstanding he was put to bed for three hours in the middle of the day; but now he is awake again, and is drumming his little fat hands on the red cushions of the box in a perfect agony of anticipation. Then those nice little girls near him, who are so angry with their brother, because he has just discovered a school-fellow in the pit, and is wriggling about into all those odd telegraphic contortions that only little boys can perform when they wish to communicate at a distance.

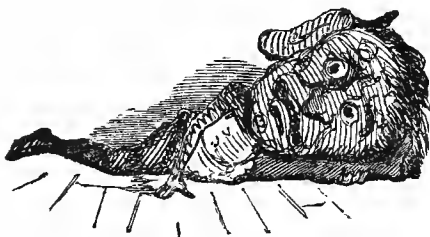
Nor are we unoccupied in the pit. The majority of

our companions are standing up to gaze at the boxes: and those two young men near us are alternately looking through one opera-glass at "that fine girl in pink under the sixth chandelier from the stage," and thinking it "must be Miss Herbert, only she wears her hair differently." The party who remain seated before us are passing round a little pocket-bottle of brandy-and-water to their friends. Watch the rough politeness with which the owner requests the gentleman by his side to "ask his good lady to take some," and the lady's pretty coquetry of refusal in accepting. "Do, ma'am, it'll do you good," says our friend, as he wipes the mouth of the bottle with his cuff; and then, with a *little* more pressing, the lady puts it to her lips and "just tastes it;" and then she blushes and laughs, and they all join in together, and the fat man in the brown coat winks his eye, and says it's "only toast-and-water."

But see! the orchestra is again filling; there is a great shuffling about of music-books, and the most eccentric running up and down of octaves you ever heard, as if all the different instruments were having a piece of fun to themselves. The leader has taken his seat—he looks right and left at the musicians, and then, tapping on his music-desk, the overture commences. It begins with a very long rumble, intending to express mystery, and bearing some resemblance to a wheelbarrow on the Margate jetty, set to music. It proceeds—they get excited—the sounds increase, and then wind up in one grand crash, previous to the introduction of the popular airs of the day. How the little heads in the boxes begin to nod the melody—how happy they are to hear the very tunes "that sister Ellen plays at home." They would *encore* them all if the pantomime were not coming after; but, as it is, they applaud with all the strength they can

throw into their tiny hands ; when the overture winds up with the concluding chords.

“Down! down in front!” “Have the goodness, sir, to remove your hat!” Now for it, in earnest. There is a little more solemn music, all in the minor key ; the prompter gives three knocks at his little pigeon-house door in the proscenium, and the curtain rises on the “Dungeons of Gloom in the kingdom of Discontent.” Fearful imps, with enormous heads, are wandering about the stage ; and two, with cats’ faces, are blowing a fire that quite looks red-hot. We do not know what they say—we never hear, and, if we did, we should not understand ; but they appear to be expecting some one, from the watchfulness with which they lay their great ears



upon the ground. Then the stage opens, and some red fire is lighted ; the “Ore King of the Centre of the Earth” comes up the trap in his car, with two more demons at his feet. We are not to wonder where he is supposed to come from, or why he comes at all : the moment you criticise a pantomime, its interest is gone. It suffices to presume that he has some urgent business on hand, and that the imps whom he intrusts with his commission are called Blue-blaze, Flicker-flame, Algaroth, Star-twinkle, and Night-shade ; and that, moreover, they are all bent upon the same errand to the same place, and so all fly off different ways.

Ten to one but the next scene is a castle. The music now changes to a quaint hopping measure, and an old porter waddles on, with such a head! his body and legs look quite diminutive under it. Then a young lady appears at a window, throwing herself into all sorts of beautiful attitudes, and you see such a dreadful old woman pull her back again: and then, to keep her secluded, she, of course, brings her out of the door in front of the castle. Presently, a young knight enters, in brilliant armour, followed by his squire with another large head. The young lady flies to the young knight; the old woman pulls her back again; the squire hits the



“proud old porter” a tremendous thump on his chest with an enormous key, that knocks him through his own door; and the knight and the young lady are going to fly away, when a gong beats, the walls of the castle sink, the side-scenes change, and you behold “the Dripping Fountain of the Enchanted Well,” all silver leaf and blue fire. Here a little more action takes place, and the demons of the first scene are about to carry off the young lady, when the fountain opens, and a fairy comes out, tolerably dry, considering that she has just walked out of the water. You now see the knight, the lady, the nurse, and the squire, all sidling up towards the wings, with their hands behind their backs. The fairy speaks—



their clothes become wrinkled and loose; and, as she pronounces their respective names, the real pantomimists burst upon our delighted gaze.

Hurrah! there's the Clown! What a roar of laughter runs through the house as he crows, and throws a somerset, and greets us with old familiar—"Here we are again! how are you?" And then, what a face he makes! and how he walks upon his calves! The Panta-



"Oh! see what I've found!"

loon doddles up, and of course tumbles over him; then they take Harlequin between them, and turn him over, which feat ends in their being knocked down together by his wand; then they run after Columbine, and go hands four round very fast; then all slide up to lamps, and back again; and finally they make a hoop of themselves, and roll off at the side-scenes.

The business of the pantomime now commences in earnest; but it is so rapid and laughter-provoking that we can scarcely follow it. There are some few things, however, we always expect. Of course, amongst the scenes, there will be a lodging-house, where the Clown will knock at the door, and then lie down on the steps for every body to tumble over; of course, he will steal some beer, and attempt to pour it into his pocket, and then pretend to scoop it up with his hand as it runs down his legs; of course, there will be a coach-office, and linen-draper's shop; and all the characters will have such names as Linendraper, Mr. Poplin; Constable, Mr. Take'em-up; Sweep, Master Chummy, (whom, of course, the Clown puts into a milk-pail,) and the like; and the last scene is sure to be "the Hall of Dazzling Mirrors, in the Palace of Revolving Light," where all the pantomimists stand on their heads, and blue, red, and green fires are burnt alternately at the wings.

The curtain falls and the spell is broken. The audience have been rapidly leaving for the last five minutes; the men appear who envelope the rich 'mouldings and pillars of the boxes with canvass-wrappers; and we betake ourselves, if it meets your pleasure, to one of the comfortable taverns in the neighbourhood, to enjoy a Welsh rabbit and a pint of stout.

THE END.

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